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ORAL STATEMENT

Item 4: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar

UNITED NATIONS MUST MOVE BEYOND STATEMENTS OF CONCERN AS MYANMAR MILITARY WAGES ALL-OUT ASSAULT ON ITS OWN PEOPLE

UN Human Rights Council
Forty-sixth session
22 February – 23 March 2021

Madame President,

Since this Council met for a special session on Myanmar just weeks ago, the situation has continued to deteriorate. Each new day brings with it reports of fresh horrors from across the country.

The Myanmar military has escalated their assault on their own people, using increasingly lethal tactics and weapons normally seen on the battlefield against peaceful protesters and bystanders across the country.¹ Tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition are being used against peaceful protesters, resulting in at least 61 deaths so far.² Perceived critics and opponents are being arbitrarily detained and forcibly disappeared, with credible reports of torture. As of 7 March, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners – Burma (AAPPB) noted 1,790 individuals have been arrested, charged, or sentenced since 1 February.³ We are particularly concerned for those whose whereabouts and charges remain unknown to family members weeks since their initial arrests. Night raids on homes are being used to stoke fear and the Military continues to ramp up efforts to limit and monitor communication, shutting down the internet and blocking access to certain websites and platforms.

¹ Amnesty International, Myanmar: Vast arsenal and notorious troops deployed during nationwide 'killing spree' protest crackdown – new research, 11 March 2021, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/03/myanmar-arsenal-troops-deployed-crackdown/>.

² 61 people had been killed as at 4 March according to the report of the Special Rapporteur to the 46th session of the UN Human Rights Council (A/HRC/46/56), para 29 https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session46/Documents/A_HRC_46_56.pdf, which notes that 23 people were killed by 1 March and 38 more on 3 March.

³ Assistance Association for Political Prisoners – Burma (AAPPB), 7 March Daily Briefing, Detention and Fatality Lists in Relation to Military Coup, available at: https://aappb.org/?p=13460&_cf_chl_jschl_tk_=50c44cc57ce70d0d86fd2108e268d00f521a6d20-1615220527-0-Ae5-OiHQgsrAdHt_HJfaqKc11m-yR7NrLD12G5qwZbpvxBx9-cuMxog31TvrT8mcJof46HScAKWEN_CyoDq_mf4latThMDgaOJazjB7AaJBEenam7Yxm-nZXE23rTYSFM1mY6vy5pNZ1GTERDedimrHe_hQin8xdEB4biwCcJBCCbqrGM14icckPpv2JA1AMboJDVN3rTzhZszZrav2Od99leMOgsAvHqVYD86Mu6Yo8R42Ggdteq9DaCglhUr6IERyDs4s0cGmnkaOIZWsZkriqPB8VgvYI5B7vy9f9SITtQw2kVlpxfOjR36rQfE7fPlorrZEI IQX6A3ujzup_MvA.

We fear the repetition of past crimes against ethnic minorities in Rakhine, Chin, Kachin and Northern Shan States, given the Military's long history of committing atrocities with impunity.

Madam President,

Despite the significant risks faced, the people of Myanmar – from all communities; across the country – have continued to demand their rights peacefully and to ask the international community to support them.

On 28 February, a young protester called Nyi Nyi Aung Htet Naing was shot dead in Yangon. He was one of at least 18 people killed that day around the country. The day prior, according to media reports, he had asked on social media: 'How many bodies does the UN need to take action?'

We ask the same question. We urge all states to move beyond statements of concern, and to take long overdue action to halt violations and hold perpetrators to account. Not only to support the resolution under consideration at this session and consider what more this Council can do; but also to ensure the UN Security Council refers the situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and imposes, without further delay, a comprehensive global arms embargo and targeted financial sanctions on senior Military officials credibly accused of atrocity crimes.

Those calling themselves allies of Myanmar must stop shielding the Military from accountability and prioritise the protection of the rights of the people of Myanmar. History will judge harshly those states that abandon them at this critical moment.

Thank you.