



22 March 2021

## **Statement on Myanmar: Justice and Accountability for the Escalating violence by the Myanmar Military (Tatmadaw)**

The Asia Justice Coalition calls on the UN Security Council and international community to act with urgency, to address the ongoing violent repression by the military junta in Myanmar.

On 1 February 2021, the military staged a coup d'état and declared a state of emergency, arbitrarily [detaining](#) politicians and activists. The human rights situation has deteriorated significantly since then. The military appointed Myanmar's State Administration Council (SAC), which has since [dictated](#) key revisions to the country's legal system so as to criminalize peaceful protests, and enable violations of the right to privacy and widescale arbitrary arrests and detention. Martial law has been [imposed](#) in several areas of the country as a tactic to subject civilians to military tribunals.

Popular movements across Myanmar have taken to the streets and engaged in civil disobedience to resist the military junta. The military has responded by using excessive and often lethal force against peaceful protesters. It is clear that these attacks by the military and police officers are systematic and organised as they are being witnessed across the country. Live ammunition has been fired against unarmed persons in violation of international law. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has [reported](#) that at least 149 people have been killed by the military and police officers since 1 February. Hundreds have been wounded during protests and over 2084 people have been arbitrarily detained or arrested. Cases of abductions of community leaders have been reported with journalists being targeted and arbitrarily detained or arrested.

These gross human rights violations that include extra-judicial killings, use of excessive force and live ammunition against peaceful protesters perpetrated by the military [must](#) be independently investigated as possible crimes against humanity. To ensure that perpetrators are held accountable, the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) has [urged](#) recipients of illegal orders relating to the violations being perpetrated in Myanmar to contact them.

The international community urgently needs to pursue a policy grounded in justice, accountability, and human rights. We join the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, in highlighting [that](#) security forces in Myanmar must halt their vicious and unlawful crackdown on peaceful protestors. Military leaders should be held accountable for the serious human rights violations perpetrated now and in the past.

The Asia Justice Coalition makes the following recommendations:

- Call upon Myanmar authorities to immediately end the use of excessive and lethal force against people protesting the military coup, stop arbitrary arrests and internet shutdowns.
- Call upon ASEAN member states to impose targeted sanctions and an enhanced arms embargo against Myanmar's military and police.

- Support the work of the UN Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) in investigating the most serious international crimes and violations of international law being committed in Myanmar.
- The UN Security Council should impose targeted sanctions on the junta leaders and military-owned companies providing direct revenue to the military and its leaders. It should immediately implement a global arms embargo on Myanmar's military and police that includes any security assistance.
- The UN Security Council should refer the situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for full investigation, in keeping with the Rome Statute.
- States must use all avenues available towards justice and accountability including targeted sanctions, global arms embargo and, where possible, criminal actions based on the principle of instituting universal jurisdiction.

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