



Time for UN to pursue justice

Hold the Myanmar military accountable for grave crimes

[22 March 2022] “UN must explore all possible ways to prosecute Myanmar military leaders and hold them accountable for genocide and atrocity crimes” said Human Rights Defenders from Myanmar in an [online event](#) as they engaged with the UN Human Rights Council following a series of reporting on Myanmar during the Council’s 49th Regular Session.

Nearly 14 months after the military launched its nationwide campaign of violence and terror in an attempt to illegally seize power, the military has killed over 2,000 people, including women and children and detained over 12,000.

Having so far failed to impose its rule over the territory and population, the military continues to intensify its cruel and brutal attacks against the people of Myanmar with indiscriminate airstrikes, shelling, massacres, burning down of villages, torture, and sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, the military continues to block humanitarian aid to over 880,000 displaced people across the country while attacking medical facilities and medical and humanitarian workers.

Despite the brutal violence, the Myanmar people have continued to resist the military, steadfastly demonstrating their courageous will and defense of their democracy.

Over 400,000 civil servants who have joined the Civil Disobedience Movement refuse to work under the military, while others carryout general strikes and street protests. Boycott of military products and refusal to pay electricity bills continues and self-defense forces and formation of new autonomous local administrations alongside the existing parallel administrations in ethnic areas mar the military’s desperate attempts to assert administrative and territorial control.

Responding to [calls](#) made by civil society organizations for the UN to explore avenues to prosecute Myanmar military leaders and hold them accountable for grave crimes in Myanmar, **His Excellency Aung Myo Min, National Unity Government’s Minister for Human Rights** expressed his support during the online event, stating, ‘The UN Secretary-General should explore the feasibility of the establishment by the General Assembly or the Human Rights Council of an ad hoc tribunal to support accountability for alleged violations of international law in Myanmar.’

Following Minister Aung Myo Min’s remarks, **Marzuki Darusman of Special Advisory Council for Myanmar and Former Chairperson of the Independent International UN Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar** stated during the event, ‘To complement the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, that has been in operation for the last few years, it is only logical that an entity needs to be set up that is precisely a jurisdiction that would allow the IIMM - that was established by the Human Rights Council - to undertake its next step, and that is, on the basis of preparing the ground for criminal prosecution, for the Council to decide on a jurisdiction where those prosecutions can take place.’

Human Rights Defenders also called on the UN to seek pathways for accountability.

'International community must rally to end cycle of impunity enjoyed by the military, and call on the Human Rights Council to explore all options to establish a jurisdiction to prosecute Myanmar military for committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, and stand with the people of Myanmar in their defense of democracy,' **said Khin Ohmar of Progressive Voice.**

'We welcome US designating the brutal violence committed against the Rohingya as genocide, but this must translate into action to hold the perpetrators accountable. Failure to act on the grave crimes being committed against the people of Myanmar, past and present, will only serve to embolden the military junta,' **said Razia Sultana of RW Welfare Society.**

'The military junta continues to conduct fierce airstrikes against civilians in Karen State, as well as in Karenni, Chin, and Sagaing with total impunity. CSOs and other human rights organizations have already provided, and continue to provide, the necessary evidence of atrocity crimes committed by the Myanmar military to UN bodies. It is time for active steps to be taken by the Human Rights Council to ensure that justice mechanisms move forward without delay.' **said Naw Htoo Htoo of Karen Human Rights Group.**

'Myanmar military is burning villages to the ground, conducting mass scorched earth campaigns in towns such as Thantlang, Chin State and using rape as a weapon of war. Without concrete action to stop this military's campaign of terror, including an arms embargo and targeted sanctions, whole villages will continue to be reduced to ashes,' **said Salai Za Uk of Chin Human Rights Organization.**

'The price of inaction is surely clear to the Members of the Human Rights Council, which has documented military's crimes for over 15 years. Through its various mandates and mechanisms such as the [Fact-Finding Mission](#) and [Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar](#), the Council has amassed vast amounts of evidence of Myanmar military's atrocities including the genocide against Rohingya. It is time for the Council to build on this work and explore all possible avenues to hold the military leaders accountable through criminal prosecutions," **said FORUM-ASIA.**

The online Side Event during the 49th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council "*Justice and Accountability for Myanmar: Expectations and Possibilities*", which took place on 22 March 2022 can be viewed here: <https://www.facebook.com/progressivevoice/videos/2137679243064231>

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