



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 47th SESSION

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE WITH THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN MYANMAR – 7 JULY 2021

[Mr Thomas Andrews - UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar](#)

In the five months since the government of Myanmar was overthrown in an **illegal coup**, two interlocking patterns have emerged: first, the **military junta's widespread, systematic attacks against the people of Myanmar**, acts that amount to crimes against humanity. And second, the **inability of the international community to do what is required** to stop it.

The junta's military forces have **murdered approximately 900 people**; **forcibly displaced** hundreds of thousands; **tortured** many, including **torturing people in custody to death**; **disappeared** untold numbers; and **arbitrarily detained** nearly **6,000**. The junta continues to **stifle freedom of expression**, **arbitrarily detain thousands**, and systematically **strip away due process and fair trial rights**. It is using **criminal defamation charges** to target **journalists, human rights defenders, and civil society leaders**.

Authorities recently **imprisoned a four-year-old child**, when they could not locate her father for arrest. And now the junta has begun **detaining lawyers** for defending their detained clients.

On top of this, a **third wave of COVID** is taking hold in the country. Limited testing shows an alarming positivity rate of 26 percent. Myanmar is at grave risk of becoming a **Covid 19 super-spreader state**.

Despite facing **lethal force**, people across Myanmar continue to **vigorously oppose the junta** and demand that it end its attempted coup. The junta captured many levers of state power, Myanmar's Treasury and the administrative offices, but it has **not taken control of the nation and its people**.

Civil servants continue en masse to **refuse to work for the junta**. **Boycotts** of military-produced goods and services continue. And support for the opposition leadership, the **National Unity Government**, is widespread. The National Unity Government —established by parliamentarians whom the junta illegally denied the right to form a government—is laying the groundwork for a **new, unified Myanmar**. It has taken the **historic step of welcoming the Rohingya ethnic minority** back into the national fabric of Myanmar, assuring them justice and full citizenship rights. The National Unity Government deserves to be embraced as a **valuable resource and partner by member states**.

Some in Myanmar have sought to **defend themselves** through the formation of **defence forces** and **acts of sabotage**, while some are reportedly targeting suspected junta collaborators and officials. This trend could **escalate quickly** and the junta's pattern of the use of **grossly disproportionate force** in response will likely lead to an even greater loss of life.

The junta is relentlessly trying to **stop the truth from emerging** through social media, including the confiscation of **mobile phones** to search for evidence of support for the opposition; arresting **journalists** and even threatening those who call them what they are, a military junta.

Some nations have decided to act by **imposing sanctions to reduce the junta's access to revenue** and weapons. While these measures are important and welcomed, they remain limited and without the coordination necessary to have significant impact.

Five months ago, before this very Council, I called for the **formation of an Emergency Coalition for the People of Myanmar**. An Emergency Coalition – nations willing to stand with the people of Myanmar through meaningful, coordinated action – would be in a position to **impose significant costs on the junta**. It could reduce the junta's ability to attack its citizens, **save the lives** of those in



acute crisis, and gain political leverage so that the crisis in Myanmar might come to a permanent conclusion. There are viable options that such a coalition would have to achieve these goals:

- An Emergency Coalition could significantly **reduce the revenue that the junta needs** to continue its reign of terror. Cut off their income, and you cut off their capacity to continue their relentless attack on the people of Myanmar. Many nations have yet to impose any **economic sanctions**, and a key sector remains untouched by all: **oil and gas**.
- An Emergency Coalition for the People of Myanmar could **outlaw the export of arms to the Myanmar military**, as called for in last month's General Assembly resolution.
- Coalition members that have **universal jurisdiction laws** could coordinate investigations of these ongoing crimes and make preparations to **file charges against Myanmar's senior security officials**.
- Coalition members could dramatically **increase humanitarian aid** by working with the National Unity Government to utilize non-junta channels to assure that aid goes to where it belongs – to the people of Myanmar.
- The coalition could **work together to deny any claims of legitimacy** that the junta may try to assert, such as the false claim that they are recognized by the United Nations.

These actions are all possible but they require nations that are prepared to act to do so through **collaboration outside of formal mechanisms that require consensus**. Frankly, consensus decision-making has meant paralysis, and **paralysis is lethal to the people of Myanmar**.

Future generations may look back upon this moment and ask: "Did the people and nations of the world do all that they reasonably could to **help the people of Myanmar** in their hour of great peril and need?" I am afraid that the honest answer to that question, at this point, is **no**.

The international community is failing the people of Myanmar.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE WITH STATES AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (30 delegations)

Lithuania (on behalf of Nordic-Baltic countries), European Union, Pakistan (on behalf of OIC), Liechtenstein, Canada, Libya, Australia, Bangladesh, Czech Republic, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, France, Japan, USA, Singapore, Malaysia, Belgium, United Kingdom, Turkey, Vietnam, Marshall Islands, Austria, Philippines, New Zealand, Switzerland, Jordan, Brunei, Malawi, Cambodia, Timor-Leste.

10 NGOs took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue:

Baptist World Alliance, CCPR Centre, Human Rights Watch, Asian Forum, FIDH, Law Council of Australia, Article 19, CIVICUS, Next Century Foundation, Asian Legal Resource Center.



To read more about the situation of human rights in Myanmar discussed during the 47th session of the Human Rights Council, read our complementary summary report on the **Interactive Dialogue on the High-Commissioner oral update on the Situation of human rights in Myanmar**, held on 6 and 7 July 2021 at the Human Rights Council.

The report includes detailed presentation of the human rights situation in Myanmar by the High Commissioner and summary of responses by States and civil society.

LINK: <https://gchragd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2021.07.07.-HRC47-ID-on-situation-of-human-rights-in-Myanmar-Geneva-Centre.pdf>