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Myanmar: Bachelet deplores conviction and sentencing of Aung San Suu Kyi

GENEVA (6 December 2021) – UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet on Monday deplored the conviction and sentencing of Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi to four years of imprisonment by a military-controlled court, and called for her release.

In staging the coup on 1 February 2021, the Myanmar military, also known as the Tatmadaw, arrested Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint, and numerous members of the National League for Democracy (NLD). Since then, the Tatmadaw have detained over 10,000 of their opponents arbitrarily, with at least 175 people – including many NLD members - reported to have died in custody most likely due to ill-treatment or torture. The High Commissioner called for the immediate release of all who have been arbitrarily detained.

"The conviction of the State Counsellor following a sham trial in secretive proceedings before a military-controlled court is nothing but politically-motivated," Bachelet said. "It is not only about arbitrary denial of her freedom – it closes yet another door to political dialogue."

Aung San Suu Kyi was convicted of incitement and breaking COVID-19 rules. She is still facing charges of corruption and electoral fraud. On 10 November Than Naing, former planning minister of Kayin State, and Nan Khin Htwe Myint, former chief minister of Kayin State, were sentenced to 90 and 75 years of imprisonment respectively on charges of corruption.

"The military is attempting to instrumentalize the courts to remove all political opposition," Bachelet said. "But these cases cannot provide a legal veneer to the illegitimacy of the coup and military rule."

"This verdict against Aung San Suu Kyi will only deepen rejection of the coup," the High Commissioner added. "It will harden positions when what is needed is dialogue and a peaceful, political settlement of this crisis."

Bachelet also strongly condemned the "vicious, utterly reprehensible" attack reported yesterday in Kyimyindaing Township in Yangon, where security forces used a truck to ram into unarmed protesters and then fired upon the group using live ammunition.

The High Commissioner expressed concern that these developments risk further exacerbating tensions and violence.

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UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, deplores sentencing of state counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi to 4 years in prison by a military court

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