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OHCHR – UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Press briefing notes on Myanmar

More than 100 days after the coup in Myanmar, the military authorities are showing no sign of letting up in their brutal crackdown on opponents in a bid to consolidate their hold on power. At the same time, there is no weakening of the resolve of the civil disobedience movement and other facets of opposition to the coup leaders.

As of 10 May, credible sources indicate that the security forces, using unnecessary, disproportionate and lethal force to suppress demonstrations and other forms of public participation, have killed at least 782 individuals since the coup on 1 February. While much of the world's attention has been on the number of peaceful protesters and bystanders killed by the security forces, the authorities continue to commit other gross human rights violations against the people of Myanmar.

There are daily raids on private homes and offices, and more than 3,740 people are currently in detention. We are deeply alarmed that the whereabouts and fate of hundreds of these individuals are unknown. These are situations that may amount to enforced disappearances.

Of those in custody, the vast majority have not been brought before a judge, while most of the 86 people prosecuted thus far have been tried in secret, with limited or no access to any form of legal counsel. Military tribunals and courts martial have been established in several townships in which martial law was declared. At least 25 individuals have received the death sentence to date – some 20 of whom were tried in absentia.

Over the past month, the military leadership has issued over 1,561 arrest warrants targeting civil society activists, trade unionists, journalists, academics, public personalities and online voices, so driving the vast majority of them underground. To intensify pressure, the military authorities have resorted to taking relatives of wanted people into custody to force them to turn themselves in to the police.

The military authorities are also stepping up their efforts to pressure civil servants back to work. In recent weeks, the coup leadership has dismissed, removed, or suspended more than 3,000 civil servants – nearly 70 per cent of those targeted have been women. Those suspended include 990 university professors, researchers and assistants who in the last few days have been suspended for failing to report to work. There are reports that up to 11,000 more educational workers were suspended on Monday.

We are also deeply concerned about the situation of people fleeing persecution, especially human rights defenders and journalists.

As the armed conflicts between the Tatmadaw and some of the ethnic armed organizations, particularly in Kachin and Kayin states, have intensified, people seeking protection are being forced to consider seeking safety outside the country. When they do so, they should receive such protection and support from Myanmar's neighbours.

It is clear that there needs to be greater international involvement to prevent the human rights situation in Myanmar from deteriorating further. Despite the five-point plan agreed at the ASEAN leaders' meeting on 24 April, the Myanmar military leadership has shown no sign of abiding by it. We call on ASEAN to react quickly and to intensify its actions to ensure the military keeps to these commitments and to hold them accountable for failing to do so.

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ecoi.net summary:

Since the military coup on 1 February 2021, at least 782 individuals have been killed by security forces and the military; more than 3,740 persons are currently detained, with the whereabouts of hundreds of them unknown

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Austrian Red Cross
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum
Research and Documentation (ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße 32, 1041 Wien
T (Telefon) +43 1 589 00 583
F (Fax) +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

Contact
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