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AFTERNOON

7 July 2021

The Human Rights Council this afternoon held an interactive dialogue with Tom Andrews, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, who said that the people of Myanmar were working to save their country, but desperately needed the support of the international community before it was too late. At the moment, the international community was failing the people of Myanmar.

The Special Rapporteur said that in the five months since the Government of Myanmar was overthrown in an illegal coup, two interlocking patterns had emerged: first, the military junta's widespread, systematic attacks against the people of Myanmar, acts that amounted to crimes against humanity. And second, the inability of the international community to do what was required to stop it. The junta continued to stifle freedom of expression, arbitrarily detain thousands, and systematically strip away due process and fair trial rights. Despite facing lethal force, people across Myanmar continued to vigorously oppose the junta and demand that it end its attempted coup.

Mr. Andrews said the National Unity Government - established by parliamentarians whom the junta illegally denied the right to form a government - was laying the groundwork for a new, unified Myanmar. It had taken the historic step of welcoming the Rohingya ethnic minority back into the national fabric of Myanmar, assuring them justice and full citizenship rights. This Government deserved to be embraced as a valuable resource and partner by Member States. The people of Myanmar were working to save their country. But they desperately needed the support of the international community before it was too late. At the moment, however, the international community was failing the people of Myanmar.

In the discussion, speakers took positive note of the release of some detainees by the Myanmar military authorities. They called for the release of all political leaders, journalists and human rights defenders. Restrictions on access to information and freedom of expression must be lifted. Furthermore, the military leadership must end the state of emergency. Speakers shared the conviction that the international community must take decisive action to prevent further bloodshed, including through the imposition of an arms embargo. No weapon should be sold to an army that used them to target civilians rather than to protect them. Speakers urged an immediate cessation of all violence and violations of human rights against Rohingyas; strict compliance with International Criminal Court's provisional measures; and cooperation with all independent national, regional and international criminal justice and judicial mechanisms, and the United Nations and its relevant human rights mechanisms.

In concluding remarks, Mr. Andrews recommended the formation of an Emergency Coalition of those who were willing to exert economic pressure on the military authorities and prevent them from accessing weapons. The Rohingyas citizens of Rakhine were in great danger: Rohingya villages had been surrounded by security personnel. The international community could not

release the pressure on the regime. Bangladesh deserved the gratitude of all, for opening its hearts and doors.

Reiterating the need for pressure to be exerted on the military, he said it was a necessary condition for the success of any initiative related to the political process, led by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or otherwise.

Speaking in the discussion were Lithuania on behalf of a group of countries, European Union, Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Liechtenstein, Canada, Libya, Australia, Bangladesh, Czech Republic, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, France, Japan, United States, Singapore, Malaysia, Belgium, United Kingdom, Turkey, Viet Nam, Marshall Islands, Austria, Philippines, New Zealand, Switzerland, Jordan, Brunei Darussalam, Malawi, Luxembourg, Cambodia, and Timor-Leste.

The following civil society organizations also took the floor: Baptist World Alliance, *Centre pour les Droits Civils et Politiques - Centre CCPR*, Human Rights Watch, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, International Federation for Human Rights Leagues, Law Council of Australia, Article 19 - International Centre Against Censorship, CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Next Century Foundation, and Asian Legal Resource Centre.

China spoke in right of reply.

The webcast of the Human Rights Council meetings can be found [here](#). All meeting summaries can be found [here](#). Documents and reports related to the Human Rights Council's forty-seventh regular session can be found [here](#).

The Council will next meet on Thursday, 8 July at 9 a.m. to start the consideration of the outcome documents of States examined during the thirty-seventh session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group.

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar

Presentation of the Oral Progress Report

TOM ANDREWS, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, stated that in the five months since the Government of Myanmar was overthrown in an illegal coup, two interlocking patterns had emerged: first, the military junta's widespread, systematic attacks against the people of Myanmar, acts that amounted to crimes against humanity. And second, the inability of the international community to do what was required to stop it. The junta's military forces had 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 continued to stifle freedom of expression, arbitrarily detain thousands, and systematically strip away due process and fair trial rights. It had also cut off food, water and medicine to those who had been displaced by its

brutal attacks on entire villages. On top of this, a third COVID wave was taking hold in the country with one in four having tested positive to this highly contagious disease.

Despite facing lethal force, people across Myanmar continued to vigorously oppose the junta and demand that it end its attempted coup. Civil servants continued en masse to refuse to work for the junta. Boycotts of military-produced goods and services continued. The National Unity Government - established by parliamentarians whom the junta illegally denied the right to form a government - was laying the groundwork for a new, unified Myanmar. It had taken the historic step of welcoming the Rohingya ethnic minority back into the national fabric of Myanmar, assuring them justice and full citizenship rights. This Government deserved to be embraced as a valuable resource and partner by Member States. The people of Myanmar were working to save their country. But they desperately needed the support of the international community before it was too late.

Mr. Andrews said he had called for the establishment of an Emergency Coalition for the People of Myanmar – nations willing to stand with the people of Myanmar through meaningful, coordinated action. It 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 just and permanent conclusion. At the moment, however, the international community was failing the people of Myanmar.

Discussion

Speakers took positive note of the release of some detainees by the Myanmar military authorities. They called for the release of all political leaders, journalists and human rights defenders. Restrictions on access to information and freedom of expression must be lifted. Furthermore, the military leadership must end the state of emergency. Speakers shared the conviction that the international community must take decisive action to prevent further bloodshed, including through the imposition of an arms embargo. No weapon should be sold to an army that used them to target civilians rather than to protect them, speakers said. The Five Point Consensus reached at the leaders meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations was a positive first step, but it must be swiftly and genuinely implemented. Speakers urged an immediate cessation of all violence and violations of human rights against Rohingyas; strict compliance with the International Criminal Court's provisional measures; and cooperation with all independent national, regional and international criminal justice and judicial mechanisms, and the United Nations and its relevant human rights mechanisms. All violations of international humanitarian law must be investigated without delay. Military authorities had to implement all recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine state, speakers stressed.

All nations must cease the export of arms and transfer of dual-use technology to the military junta. These transfers seriously undermined human rights and aided the military in committing atrocities against the people of Myanmar. While welcoming the recent release of over 2,000 prisoners, speakers demanded the release of all individuals who had been arbitrarily arrested, including Aung San Suu Kyi. Intentional targeting of medical personnel and first responders by security forces was a clear violation of the Geneva Convention. The plight of the Rohingyas

and other ethnic minorities was particularly concerning to speakers - the coup had made the safe and sustainable return of Rohingya refugees impossible. International actors operating in Myanmar must cut ties with the junta, and the United Nations General Assembly must recognise the National Unity Government. It was unacceptable that women and children were deliberately targeted. The rule of law was under assault as the military was filling judicial vacancies with loyalists. The junta was tightening its grip on the Internet, continuously removing access to social media networks, virtual private networks and other tools.

Concluding Remarks

TOM ANDREWS, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, thanked those present for their comments and questions, notably the non-governmental organizations, which had been doing vital work. He recommended the formation of an Emergency Coalition of those who were willing to exert economic pressure on the military authorities and prevent them from accessing weapons. The Rohingyas citizens of Rakhine were in great danger: Rohingya villages had been surrounded by security personnel. The international community could not release the pressure on the regime. Bangladesh deserved the gratitude of all, for opening its hearts and doors. Without the help of Bangladesh, there would have been even more deaths resulting from the genocidal acts. Before the coup, Myanmar was moving slowly but surely to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. All these efforts were now in tatters; it was outrageous that the junta had carried out attacks against groups of volunteers providing healthcare services.

Greater coordination was needed to provide support and humanitarian aid to those on the frontlines. The Myanmar Humanitarian Fund must absolutely be fully funded. Regarding the letters received by students, Mr. Andrews encouraged those who had received them and anyone having information on this matter and other forms of intimidation to share it with him. Reiterating the need for pressure to be exerted on the military, he said it was a necessary condition for the success of any initiative related to the political process, led by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or otherwise. This was a crisis which required coordinated action on the part of the international community.

Link: <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/meeting-summary/2021/07/afternoon-special-rapporteur-situation-human-rights-myanmar>

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