

Citizens' Appeal in Support of Myanmar's People's Struggle against Military Repression and Demand for Government of Nepal to Act

Kathmandu, 28 March 2021

We undersigned citizens of Nepal are proud of the Myanmar people's valorous stand for democracy, appalled by the murderous suppression by the Tatmadaw military, and distressed by the lack of adequate response from the governments of South Asia and globally.

We urgently call upon the Government of Nepal to stand up for democratic values and on the side of the people of Myanmar who are engaged in an uprising. The Government must help organise a deliberate and integrated international response to force the junta that is led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, to immediately reverse its takeover and abide by the results of the November 2020 elections.

The spiraling violence in Myanmar over the past two months has led to the killing of more than 300, and 91 citizens were killed yesterday even as the junta celebrated the Myanmar Armed Forces Day. Thousands of political leaders and civil society activists are behind bars, including the NLD party leader Aung San Suu-Kyi, and there are reports of brutal treatment of detainees in jail.

We are shocked that the diplomats of several countries attended the Armed Forces Day ceremony even as the military has gone berserk massacring peaceful protestors. The 27 March announcement on state-run television that people could be "shot in the head or on the back" for demonstrating shows the junta's utter lack of humanity and the extent to which it will go to protect its power and privilege.

We demand a coordinated international campaign to restore constitutional order, and to isolate and penalise Myanmar's armed forces as well as individual military officers. We request that the UN Human Rights Council, in coordination with the various Special Rapporteurs, begin work on a chargesheet against all those involved in crimes against humanity in Myanmar. The dire situation in Myanmar merits strong action by the UN Security Council, invoking the principle of 'Responsibility to Protect' approved by the summit of world leaders at the UN General Assembly in 2005. The natural resources of Myanmar, from lumber to gems and natural gas, make it an attractive playground for those who want to fleece the people by pandering to the military, as has happened over the decades. The world needs to develop more sensitivity towards the people of Myanmar, who have fought for democracy repeatedly and over generations, including the uprisings of 1988, 1996 and 2007.

Democratic, accountable governance in Myanmar is important for the sake of social justice, equity, economic growth and inclusive polity within the country, and to ensure that the demands of the various ethnic groups and communities are addressed. The divides that remain between the various ethnic groups of Myanmar can only be resolved under the aegis of a pluralistic, accountable state and a supportive international environment.

The appalling treatment of the Rohingya community and the spectre of massive statelessness is the result, we believe, of the stifling of the democratic urge of the government led by State Counselor Aung San Suu-Kyi against the backdrop of military power.

The hope that the new Constitution of 2008, howsoever inadequate, would lead towards full-fledged civilian rule has been gradually eroded. The events since the military's rejection of the NLD party's win in the November 2020 elections and the coup of 1 February 2021 show that the generals have no qualms in crushing the popular will.

Beyond the demand of its own people for democracy, growth and inclusion, these values and goals are also important to ensure that Myanmar emerges as a force for peace in Asia as a whole. The country has the capacity to serve as the bridge between South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia, but the possibilities will not bear fruit as long as the country remains under the grip of the brutal stratocracy.

We signatories decry the regression of the Myanmar polity back into the hands of the military at the expense of the efforts to establish constitutional democracy. We demand that the international community recognise the results of the elections of November 2020, when NLD won a majority in both houses of Parliament.

We urge the world community to play its role in helping remove all authority given to the Tatmadaw by the Constitution of 2008 in the hope of peace and gradual transition, which it has misused continuously against the interests of the people of Myanmar.

Signatories:

1. Bipin Adhikari
2. Renu Adhikari (Dr.)
3. Rem Bishowkarma
4. Dambar Chemjong
5. Rajendra Dahal
6. Kul Chandra Gautam
7. Jay Prakash Gupta
8. Arjun Karki (Dr.)
9. Rameshore Khanal
10. Mahesh Maskey (Dr.)
11. Sushil Pyakurel
12. Kanak Mani Dixit

Contact: +977-9851053209