

**Burma: Human Rights Council urges Burma to address human rights violations but overlooks suppression of student protests****For Immediate Release**

(Geneva, 27 March 2015) : The 28<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council today passed, by consensus, a resolution entitled 'Situation of Human Rights Myanmar' and extended by one year the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar. Regrettably while welcoming the government of Burma/ Myanmar's commitment to continue in the path of reforms, the Council failed to take note of the violent crackdown on peaceful student protests that took place even as the body sat in session.

The crackdown was the worst the country had seen since 2007 and a dangerous indication of the negative trajectory of Burma/Myanmar's reform process. *"The decision to overlook the significance of such repression has only weakened the Council's ability to effectively hold Burma/Myanmar accountable to its commitment for reforms"* said Evelyn Balais-Serrano, Executive Director of FORUM-ASIA.

While appreciating the states that highlighted the crackdown on during deliberations on the resolution, FORUM-ASIA expresses concern that several Asian states acted to weaken the resolution including India and China that disassociated themselves from the consensus on the resolution.

FORUM-ASIA takes note of the several positive provisions in the resolution that address freedoms of expression, assembly and association as well as the safety and security of journalists, civil society organisations and human rights defenders. FORUM-ASIA further reiterates the resolution's call for the involvement of women in conflict resolution and echoes its concern on the imposition of martial law in the Kokang self administered zone; the increased fighting in Kachin and Shan States and the situation of the Rohingya and other minorities in the Rakhine state.

*"The resolution rightly takes note of the increase in nationalist based intolerance of religious and ethnic minorities and calls for the government to publicly condemn the discourse and take action"* said Khin Ohmar, Coordinator of Burma Partnership. She however noted that *"when it comes to business enterprises, the resolution has been lukewarm in its response, ignoring the gravity of business related human rights abuses. The complicity of businesses in nationwide land grabs and the suppression of those who oppose such injustices need to end if Burma/Myanmar is committed to sustainable development and genuine reform."*

Noting that Burma/Myanmar disassociated itself from the Council's consensus on the resolution, Aung Myo Min, Executive Director of Equality Myanmar said that *"Burma/Myanmar should heed to calls in the resolution and take immediate steps to cease all repression of fundamental freedoms and ensure that credible Constitutional reforms and national elections are held in 2015"*. He further added that if this is to be achieved *"the constitutional referendum and elections should lead to all national institutions including the military being brought under a democratically elected, fully representative civilian government as called for by the resolution"*.

**About FORUM-ASIA:**

*FORUM-ASIA is a Bangkok-based regional human rights group with 47 member organisations in 16 countries across Asia. FORUM-ASIA has offices in Bangkok, Jakarta and Geneva. FORUM-ASIA addresses key areas of human rights violations in the region, including freedoms of expression, assembly and association, human rights defenders, and democratisation.*

**About Equality Myanmar:**

*Equality Myanmar is a non-governmental organization that facilitates a broad range of human rights training and advocacy programs for grassroots organizations, political party and community.*

**About Burma Partnership:**

*Burma Partnership is a network of organizations throughout the Asia-Pacific region, advocating for and mobilizing a movement for democracy and human rights in Burma.*

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