

Global civil society statement on Myanmar

We, the undersigned organizations, call on the United Nations Security Council to urgently impose a comprehensive global arms embargo on Myanmar to help prevent further violations of human rights against peaceful protesters and others opposing military rule. In recent weeks, Myanmar security forces have killed hundreds of people, including dozens of children, merely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Since the February 1, 2021 coup, Myanmar's military junta has responded with increasing brutality to nationwide protests calling for the restoration of democratic civilian rule. As of May 4, security forces have killed at least 769 people, including 51 children as young as 6, and arbitrarily detained several thousand activists, journalists, civil servants, and politicians. Hundreds have been forcibly disappeared, the authorities unwilling to provide information on their well-being or where they are being held. Over the past few months, the military has demonstrated a callous disregard for human life that has driven its strategy for decades. In video footage from cities and towns across the country, soldiers can be seen shooting down protesters, including children, brutally beating medical aid workers, and firing shotguns into crowds of peacefully protesting doctors.

In addition to the latest violations of human rights, Myanmar's security forces have a history of grave abuses against peaceful critics of the government and military, and war crimes and other international crimes against the Rohingya and other ethnic minority groups. Of particular note is the military's widely documented use of sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon against ethnic communities.

No government should sell a single bullet to the junta under these circumstances. Imposing a global arms embargo on Myanmar is the minimum necessary step the Security Council should take in response to the military's escalating violence. Arms and materiel provided to Myanmar's security forces are likely to be used by the security forces to commit abuses in violation of international human rights and humanitarian law.

For this reason, the undersigned organizations urge the United Kingdom, the Security Council's "penholder" on Myanmar, and other Security Council member states to begin negotiations on a resolution authorizing an arms embargo as soon as possible. This will demonstrate to the junta that there will be no more business as usual.

Security Council members have increasingly spoken with one voice on Myanmar. The Council has called for the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi and others arbitrarily detained, including civilian leaders. It has condemned the military's crackdown on peaceful protesters and called for an end to the ongoing violence. But unity is not an end in itself. The Council should now build on that unity and negotiate a resolution that would include an arms embargo and other substantive measures.

A comprehensive UN arms embargo on Myanmar should bar the direct and indirect supply, sale, or transfer of all weapons, munitions, and other military-related equipment, including dual-use goods such as vehicles and communications and surveillance equipment, as well as the provision of training, intelligence, and other military assistance. Such an embargo should be accompanied by robust monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

We note with disappointment the failure of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) April 24, 2021 summit to take more robust action to protect Myanmar's people. Less than a day after the summit's conclusions were published, the military's violence continued, which only highlights the need for UN member countries and the Security Council to take decisive action to pressure the junta to reverse course.

The time for statements has passed. The Security Council should take its consensus on Myanmar to a new level and agree on immediate and substantive action. An arms embargo would be the centerpiece of a global effort to protect the people of Myanmar from further atrocities and help bring an end to impunity for crimes under international law.

Myanmar's people cannot afford to wait any longer for the Security Council to take action.

Signatories

ACAT-France

Access Now

Act Church of Sweden

Action Committee for Democracy Development

Action on Armed Violence (AOAV)

Africa Centre for Security, Governance and Research

African Council of Religious Leaders-Religions for Peace

Alliance for Democracy in Laos

ALTSEAN Burma

Amnesty International

Arakan Institute for Peace and Development (AiPAD)

Arakan Rohingya National Organization

ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights

Asia Democracy Network

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP)

Association for Public Policy – APP (Argentina)

Association INFO BIRMANIE (Info Burma)

AVAAZ

Baptist Union of Denmark

Burma Campaign UK

Burma Human Rights Network
Burma Task Force
Burmese Rohingya Organization UK
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
Calgary Karen Community (CKCA)
California Shan Society
Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace
Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT)
Canadian Burmese Rohingya Organization
Canadian Rohingya Development Initiative
Center for Justice and Accountability
Center for Peace Education – Miriam College
Center for Victims of Torture
Centre Delas for Peace Studies
Centro de Estudios EcuMénicos, A.C. – México
Chin Human Rights Organization
Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW)
CIVICUS
Civil Rights Defenders
Committee of 100 in Finland
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)
Community Empowerment for Progress Organization
Control Arms
Cordaid
Dallas Ft. Worth Karen Community
Dallas Karen Baptist Church, TX
Danish United Nations Association
Danmission
DEEKU, the Karenni Community, USA
EarthRights International
Edmonton Karen Community Youth Organization
Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights
FOMICRES, Mozambique
Fortify Rights
Forum on Disarmament and Development (FDD)
FundIPau (Fundacio per la Pau)
Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
Global Justice Center
Global Movement for Myanmar Democracy (GM4MD)
Global Network of Women Peacebuilders
Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict

Global Witness
Good Neighbors
Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights
HelpAge International
Human Rights Foundation of Monland (Thailand)
Human Rights Information and Training Center
Human Rights Watch
Institute for Asian Democracy
Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
Institute for Statelessness and Inclusion
International Campaign for the Rohingya
International Center for Not-for-Profit Law
International Commission of Jurists
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
International Human Rights Clinic, Harvard Law School
International Karen Organization, Australia
International Service for Human Rights
International State Crime Initiative
International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
Ipas (Myanmar)
Jewish Rohingya Justice Network
Kachin Community UK
Kachin National Organization USA
Kachin Women Action Thailand
Kachin Women's Association of Thailand (KWAT)
Kansas Karenni Community, KS
Karen Youth Education Pathways USA
Karen American Association of Wisconsin
Karen Association of Huron, SD
Karen Community of Akron, OH
Karen Community of Canada (KCC)
Karen Community of Czech Republic
Karen Community of Finland
Karen Community of Hamilton
Karen Community of Iowa, IA
Karen Community of Ireland
Karen Community of Israel
Karen Community of Kansas City, KS & MO
Karen Community of Kitchener & Waterloo
Karen Community of Leamington
Karen Community of Lethbridge

Karen Community of London
Karen Community of Minnesota, MN
Karen Community of North Carolina
Karen Community of Ottawa
Karen Community of Regina
Karen Community of Rochester
Karen Community of Rock Island, IL
Karen Community of Saskatoon
Karen Community of Syracuse, NY
Karen Community of Thunderbay
Karen Community of Toronto
Karen Community of Windsor
Karen Community of Winnipeg
Karen Community Society of British Columbia
Karen Organization of America
Karen Thai Group
Karen Youth Networks
Karen Youth of Norway
Karen Youth of Toronto
Karen Youth Organization, Thailand
Karenni American Association, USA
Karenni Community of Bowling Green, KY
Karenni Community of Des Moines, IA
Karenni Community of Georgia, GA
Karenni Community of Indianapolis, IN
Karenni Community of Massachusetts, MA
Karenni Community of Minnesota, MN
Karenni Community of Missouri, MO
Karenni Community of New York, NY
Karenni Community of North Carolina, NC
Karenni Community of Portland, OR
Karenni Community of Texas
Karenni Community of Wisconsin, WI
Karenni National Women's Organization
Karenni Society of Minnesota North East
Karenni-American Catholic Association
Kenya Section of the International Commission of Jurists
Khmers Kampuchea-Kron Federation (KKF)
KontraS
Korea Karen Organization
Korea Karen Youth Organization

Latin American and Caribbean Human Security Network (SEHLAC)
L'chaim! Jews Against The Death Penalty
Liberia Action Network on Small Arms
MADRE
Mechanism of Search for Peace and Development Initiative
Mennonite Central Committee United Nations Office
Mensen met een Missie
Myanmar Trust UK
Nadia's Initiative
Nepal Peacebuilding Initiative
Never Again Coalition
No Business With Genocide
Nonviolence International
Oversea Karen Organization Japan
Pa-O Youth Organization (PYO)
Parliamentarians for Global Action
PAX
Pax Christi International
Pax Christi Philippines
PEN Myanmar
People's Federation for National Peace and Development
People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD)
Progressive Voice
Reconstructing Judaism
Refugees International
Relief Action Network for IDP and Refugee (RANIR)
RFK Human Rights
Rights for Peace
Rohingya American Society
Rohingya Intellectuals Community Association, Australia
Rohingya Organization Norway
Rohingya Women Welfare Association
Rohingya Youth Association
Saferworld Europe
South East Asia Movement for Human Rights & Justice
Southern African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa
Sustainable Peace and Development Organization
Swedish Burma Committee
Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society
The Arakan Project, Myanmar

The Kachin Relief Fund
The Shalom Center
The Zambian Network for Human Rights Defenders
TRANSCEND Pilipinas
Unitarian Universalist Association
United Nations Association – UK
United Nations Association of Sweden
US Campaign for Burma
Vision GRAM-International
Waging Peace
West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)
Women for Peace and Democracy Nepal
Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom
Women’s International Peace Centre
Women’s Peace Network
Women’s Refugee Commission
World Council of Churches
World Federalist Movement/Institute for Global Peace
Wunpawng Ninghtoi (WPN)
Yanshuf Coalition, Israel

About FORUM-ASIA:

The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) is a Bangkok-based regional network of 81 member organisations across 21 Asian countries, with consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and consultative relationship with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights. Founded in 1991, FORUM-ASIA works to strengthen movements for human rights and sustainable development through research, advocacy, capacity-development and solidarity actions in Asia and beyond. It has sub-regional offices in Geneva, Jakarta, and Kathmandu. www.forum-asia.org

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