

## **ASEAN: Implement Five-Point Consensus without further delay; allow meaningful civil society participation**

(Jakarta, 24 May 2021) – The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has yet to make meaningful progress towards implementing the ASEAN five-point consensus since the ASEAN Leaders’ Meeting exactly one month ago, the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) said.

Aiming to tackle the deteriorating socio-political crisis and to find a peaceful solution on Myanmar, ASEAN had agreed to a five-point consensus on 24 April 2021 calling on: the cessation of violence in Myanmar; the facilitation of constructive dialogue with the National Unity Government and other parties; the deployment of an ASEAN Special Envoy; the facilitation of humanitarian aid; and a visit by the ASEAN delegation to Myanmar to assess the situation.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the convening, violence has continued to escalate in Myanmar. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners’ documentation shows that at least 818 civilians and activists were killed, while 5,392 more were arbitrarily arrested, detained or charged since the military junta ousted Myanmar’s democratically-elected leaders – and these numbers continue to rise.<sup>2</sup>

‘ASEAN’s inaction signals a lack of urgency in fulfilling its five-point consensus on the Myanmar crisis. It has been a month since the ASEAN Leaders Meeting but the regional body has not rolled out any concrete plans in responding to the distressed asylum-seekers along Myanmar’s borders and has not even appointed its Special Envoy,’ said Shamini Darshni Kaliemuthu, Executive Director of FORUM-ASIA.

Suppression of media, extortion and bribery, sexual violence, rape and other forms of state-sponsored atrocities continue even after the ASEAN Leaders convening — a testament to Myanmar’s military leader Senior General Min Aung Hlaing’s blatant disregard of ASEAN’s consensus.

The consensus was also met with criticisms of civil society and the public against the junta chief’s presence at the meeting, while Myanmar’s National Unity Government, representing the democratic aspirations of the Myanmar people, were snubbed by the regional body.

The ASEAN Leaders Meeting has so far also failed to meet the rights groups’ demands for ASEAN to hold the junta accountable, support a global arms embargo and collaborate with the United Nations (UN) to address the crisis.

FORUM-ASIA echoes the continuous concerns of civil society organisations urging the ten-member bloc to immediately and effectively implement and monitor its five-point consensus. Civil society must also be included to ensure its effective implementation ahead of the next ASEAN Summit scheduled in October 2020.

‘The military junta has reversed any democratic progress the country has made in recent years. Meanwhile, the people of Myanmar are dying from gunshots, starvation and COVID-19 in the hands of the junta. If ASEAN continues to waste precious time, more civilian lives will be lost. ASEAN needs to act quickly and decisively,’ said Shamini.

<sup>1</sup> <https://asean.org/storage/Chairmans-Statement-on-ALM-Five-Point-Consensus-24-April-2021-FINAL-a-1.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Documentation as of 23 May 2021. <https://aappb.org/?p=15236>

FORUM-ASIA will continue to monitor ASEAN's promises towards the swift restoration of human rights and democratic order in Myanmar. The rights group also reiterates the need for ASEAN to establish formal relations with the National Unity Government and reject any form of reprisals against civilians by the unlawful military junta.

**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](http://www.forum-asia.org)*

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