

Myanmar: UN Security Council must 'act firmly' over military coup



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UN should hold open session, impose targeted sanctions against military and arms embargo, and refer situation to the ICC

'An emboldened military took years of international inaction as a quiet signal' for coup - Sherine Tadros

Ahead of the UN Security Council's emergency closed meeting on Myanmar today, Sherine Tadros, Amnesty International's Deputy Director of Advocacy, said:

"What we are witnessing in Myanmar didn't just suddenly happen. You cannot leave perpetrators of grave crimes under international law on the loose and then act surprised when they trample human rights again. "Yesterday, an emboldened military took years of international inaction as a quiet signal that they could oust the civilian government and embark on a spree of baseless arrests without any real consequences. "Will Security Council members continue to only talk to each other, and behind closed doors, or finally act firmly to prevent further rights violations and the very real threat of a worsening human rights crisis? "Had the Security Council acted decisively and strongly from day one, we might not be in a situation where the lives and liberty of people across Myanmar are now at even greater risk. "As we have said before, the Security Council must impose targeted financial sanctions against Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and other military leaders responsible for atrocity crimes against various ethnic minorities across the country, including the Rohingya. "The Security Council must also impose a comprehensive global arms embargo on Myanmar, and - crucially - refer the situation in Myanmar to the

International Criminal Court. “This is a critical time requiring immediate action from the Security Council, including holding an open session on Myanmar and unequivocally condemning the arrests and other human rights violations by the military. Finally, the Council must demand the immediate release of all those detained in Monday’s raids, if they are not promptly charged with a crime recognised under international law.”

The UN Security Council will hold an emergency closed meeting on Myanmar later today (10am EST/3pm UK time) in response to yesterday’s coup.

Since yesterday, the military has imposed a state of emergency under the authority of the Commander-in-Chief, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, and has detained scores of elected civilian officials and other senior political figures, as well as political activists and human rights defenders. Telecommunications blackouts have been imposed in parts of the country.

In a 2018 report, Amnesty named Min Aung Hlaing among those responsible for crimes against humanity perpetrated as part of a widespread and systematic attack against the Rohingya population in Rakhine State. Last year the military continued to commit serious human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law - including war crimes - against ethnic minority groups in Chin, Kachin, Rakhine and Shan States. Amnesty uncovered evidence of indiscriminate airstrikes that killed children, as well as torture and arbitrary detention. A UN Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar in 2018 called for Min Aung Hlaing to be investigated and prosecuted for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

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Press Contacts

1. **Press Office**

press@amnesty.org

+44 (0) 20 7413 5566

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