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**Mr. President, members of the Human Rights Council,**

**Two years after the military staged an illegal coup in Myanmar, it continues to wage a campaign of violence and oppression to crush widespread public opposition.**

**But while it has utterly failed to stop this opposition, it is succeeding in destroying the nation and assaulting the fundamental human rights of its people.**

**Even as they pursue a heroic campaign to save their country, many people from Myanmar have come to believe that a distracted world has forgotten them.**

**Mr. President it is critically important that the people of Myanmar know that they are NOT forgotten, that they are NOT alone in their fight for human rights.**

**That *all* people, no matter who or where they are, are entitled to fundamental human rights and that *all* governments have an obligation:**

* **To honor, respect and defend those rights;**
* **To refuse to support or enable those who abuse those rights;**
* **And to come to the aid of those who are survivors of violations of those rights.**

**This Human Rights Council has the profound responsibility to advance these obligations and I am deeply honored to provide you with information and recommendations that I hope prove useful as you assume this responsibility on behalf of the people of Myanmar and their human rights.**

**I am pleased to inform this Human Rights Council that the defense of human rights and citizen opposition to the junta of Myanmar has never been stronger.**

**Protests and civil disobedience continue. The junta’s control over territory and the people of Myanmar is eroding. Opposition groups are forging alliances and gaining strength.**

**The people of Myanmar are exposing the junta’s lie that a military dominated future for Myanmar is inevitable.**

**Indeed, the junta’s own actions belie its claims. On the eve of the second anniversary of the coup, the military extended its nationwide state of emergency by six months, citing the absence of peace and stability. In February it imposed martial law on 40 additional townships. These are not the actions of a regime confident in its position, but rather acts of desperation.**

**Mr. President, the junta does not offer any viable path to stability or an end to the human rights crisis in Myanmar because it is the very cause of this crisis. Most Member States recognize this and have acknowledged that the junta lacks even a shred of constitutional or democratic legitimacy. Many of them have been engaging with the credible alternative to the junta—the National Unity Government.**

**The junta now seems to be gambling that it can capture a degree of international recognition and a veneer of legitimacy by going through the motions of what they will try to describe as an “election”.**

**I urge the members of this Council to reject this outrageous claim. You cannot have a genuine election when opposition leaders are arrested, detained, tortured and executed; when it is illegal to criticize the junta; when journalists are imprisoned for doing their job.**

**While opposition remains strong, the junta’s escalating assaults on the people of Myanmar are having a devastating impact. Since the coup was launched:**

* **More than 3,000 civilians have been killed;**
* **More than 1.3 million have been displaced;**
* **More than 16,000 political prisoners are behind bars;**
* **17.6 million people are in dire need of humanitarian assistance;**
* **58,000 civilian homes and structures have been burned to the ground or otherwise destroyed;**
* **State institutions have been hollowed out and the rule of law has collapsed.**

**As the military loses control on the ground, it has increasingly taken its attacks on innocent people to the skies. There has been a marked increase in aerial bombings of villages, schools, hospitals, and encampments for displaced persons.**

**I regularly receive reports of massacres of civilians, including beheadings, and dismemberment. Torture and sexual violence remain a constant threat. Unfortunately, I have also received reports that opposition groups have committed human rights violations. These too must end.**

**Mr. President I am often asked by members of this Council what must the world do to address this human rights crisis and its consequences. I must report to you that there is both hopeful and discouraging news with respect to how we, as an international community, are responding.**

**The hopeful news is that many world leaders have raised their voice in support of the people of Myanmar. Strong resolutions criticizing the junta, its coup and its violence have passed overwhelmingly in this body, the General Assembly, and the Security Council.**

**Several nations have backed up their words with action including targeted economic sanctions and weapons bans.**

**The discouraging news is that we, as an international community, are not doing nearly enough. We can and must do better.**

**First, a minority of Member States and non-state entities continue to provide the junta with weapons, materials to manufacture weapons, or revenue that is being used to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity.**

***This must stop.***

**Those Member States that have taken actions, such as targeted sanctions or weapons bans, have failed to do so in a strategic and coordinated fashion. Only the European Union, for example, has to date imposed meaningful sanctions on Myanmar’s oil and gas sector, the junta’s largest single source of revenue. This fact speaks to a broader truth: a strategic approach to addressing the crisis in Myanmar—where the acts of Member States are linked and add up to a coherent and powerful whole—continues to be sorely lacking.**

**One of my principal recommendations continues to be the formation of a working coalition of Member States to identify actions that will have the greatest impact and then coordinate their implementation. I sincerely believe that this could make a world of difference.**

**Mr. President we can do better in pressuring the junta.**

**And we can also do better in supporting the hundreds of thousands who have been forced to flee Myanmar.**

**As I note in my latest report to you, there are countries who treat those who have escaped Myanmar with respect and support. They have received and sheltered refugees. They have established humane practices that should be scaled up and replicated, including moratoriums on deportations to Myanmar and programs to facilitate refugee access to education and healthcare.**

**But, due to their irregular migration status, too many of those who have been forced out of Myanmar have been deprived of their basic human rights. Some have been forced back into the very conflict zones from which they escaped, including people who face almost certain imprisonment, torture, or even execution. Some have been arrested, detained, or extorted by police and security forces. Many are unable to find food, education, or health care. Limited assistance programs often do not reach the most vulnerable including pregnant women, children, and elderly or disabled people. Domestic violence and the risks of human trafficking are on the rise.**

**I report on these conditions not to cast aspersions, but to shed light and make recommendations on behalf of Myanmar survivors of human rights violations who desperately need your support.**

**My reporting on this aspect of the human rights crisis facing the people of Myanmar is not just about neighboring countries. The fact is many higher income nations have offered insufficient contributions to humanitarian relief programs and paltry resettlement quotas.**

**A recent example was the World Food Programme’s announcement, just a few weeks ago, that it is being forced to cut the food rations for Rohingya families in Bangladesh by 17 percent, and may make even deeper cuts that could reduce the value of daily food rations to $.27 per day – $.27 per day!**

**Why? Because of a $125 million funding gap. Even before these cuts were made, hunger was widespread in the camps, where over 40 percent of Rohingya children suffer from stunted growth and a majority are anemic.**

**Rohingya mothers and fathers, forced to cut back in what they feed their children have told me that these cuts are already making the camps more tense and dangerous. We should not be surprised if there is a rise in violence, or if more and more families feel compelled to hand themselves over to smugglers and traffickers.**

**Mr. President, we can do better.**

**These ration cuts are symptomatic of a lack of support for victims of human rights violations from Myanmar. Last year donors provided only 63 percent of the funds needed for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis Joint Response Plan.**

**Civil society organizations operating on the border of Myanmar have the capacity to reach millions of those who face horrific human rights violations and are in need of humanitarian aid. But they lack sufficient resources to support these survivors.**

**Getting resources to these organizations and the populations they support is literally a matter of life and death.**

**The failure to do so is a stain on the conscience of the international community.**

**We can do better.**

**Mr. President, Members of this Human Rights Council, the people of Myanmar continue to demonstrate remarkable courage and tenacity in the defense of their country and the human rights of its people. They deserve our solidarity and support.**

**Let us resolve to stand with and for them and their human rights wherever they are. And let us show them, with words and, more importantly with action, that they are not forgotten, they are not alone.**

**Thank you.**