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**United Nations Human Rights Council**

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Mr. President, members of the Human Rights Council,

I am very sorry to report that since I last addressed this body, the military junta’s brutal campaign of violence against the people of Myanmar has not only continued, it has accelerated. And, while the suffering of the people of Myanmar has increased exponentially, the attention of the world has shifted elsewhere.

Today, I am calling on the members of this Council and indeed all Member States of the United Nations, to urgently reassess and recalibrate their policies towards Myanmar and to recognize that a change of course is imperative. The failure to take strong, meaningful action will be a death sentence for untold numbers of people.

In the three months since my last report to you, Myanmar has passed several grim milestones:

* More than 2,000 civilians have now been killed in the junta’s bloody campaign against its opponents.
* Over one million people are now internally displaced.
* The number of arbitrarily detained political prisoners now exceeds 11,000.
* The junta has announced that executions will soon begin of political prisoners who have been put on death row.

In the face of widespread public opposition to the junta, the military has trained its guns on growing numbers of villagers and other non-combatants. In northwest Myanmar, the military has accelerated a brutal campaign of arson and murder. Internet shutdowns imposed in the region make it difficult to document atrocities, which, of course is the military’s intention.

Junta forces have relentlessly bombed villages with fighter jets, attack helicopters, and heavy artillery, killing men, women, and children. I regularly receive reports of new massacres of unarmed civilians. Victims often include children and those who are physically unable to flee the advance of soldiers and military-backed militias.

In my view these repeated attacks on civilians—as well as other grave human rights violations—constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes.

I recently published a conference room paper, “Losing a Generation”, to document the impact that this crisis is having on Myanmar’s children.

I report that more than 250,000 children have been displaced by the junta’s attacks. At least 382 children have been killed or maimed, and more than 1,400 children have been arbitrarily detained.

I also report that 142 children have been tortured since the coup.

* These children have been beaten, cut and stabbed;
* They have been burned with cigarettes;
* They have had their fingernails and teeth pulled out;
* They have been forced to hold stress positions;
* They have been subjected to mock executions;
* They have been sexually assaulted.

At least 61 children are currently being held hostage by the junta to force adult family members who support the opposition to give themselves up.

The military’s attacks on schools and children and the collapse of the state education system have deprived at least 7.8 million children of access to education. 33,000 children could die of preventable deaths this year alone, merely because they have missed routine immunizations. Five million children require urgent humanitarian assistance. Experts warn of a looming food crisis and the possibility of a dramatic increase in rates of childhood malnutrition and stunting.

Physical and sexual abuse, the trafficking of children, and child labor are on the rise. Girls are particularly vulnerable to forced marriage and sexual exploitation.

In my conversations with Myanmar children, I have been told how their lives had been upended by military attacks, displacement, financial hardship for their families, school closures, and food shortages.

When I asked about their hopes for the future, a teenage girl said that her greatest hope is to have a good nights’ sleep, without fear, without hearing the sound of bombs and guns. A good night’s sleep.

Mr. President, members of the Human Rights Council,

The devastating and deteriorating conditions in Myanmar should lead to only one conclusion: the international community’s current approach to the crisis in Myanmar is not working.

The people of Myanmar continue to wait for the Security Council to even consider a resolution concerning Myanmar. Some Member States have failed to impose sanctions on the junta, even when they have done so in response to other crises. Member States who have adopted sanctions have failed to strategically coordinate these sanctions. Many have failed to target the junta’s largest sources of revenue and ability to move funds. ASEAN’s Five-Point Consensus has failed to generate any tangible outcomes.

As of this moment, the international community has funded only 10.5 percent of the UN’s 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan for Myanmar. This has meant that lifesaving programs have had to be suspended. This is unconscionable given the depth of need in the country, including the severe deprivation faced by children.

There has been a failure to increase cross-border aid to meet the needs of displaced populations and ethnic minority communities. Acquiescing to the junta’s demands that humanitarian aid must be funneled through channels it controls has allowed the junta to continue to weaponized humanitarian aid.

Mr. President, members of the Human Rights Council,

I would like to thank the government of Malaysia for facilitating my mission to Malaysia, which I completed last week. During my trip, I had the opportunity to meet several refugees from Myanmar including military and police deserters who had witnessed human rights abuses, protest leaders who were imprisoned and beaten, and children who had suffered irreparable harm.

Malaysian Foreign Minister Saifuddin has called on ASEAN to reassess its current approach to the crisis and to establish a plan of action and a timeframe for its implementation. He has called for ASEAN to move from a policy of “non-interference” to one of “non-indifference.”

As the crisis in Myanmar continues to worsen, it is clear that increasingly desperate people will seek safety outside of Myanmar’s borders. For many, it is literally a matter of life and death. I urge the international community to provide greater support to those fleeing Myanmar including through resettlement programs.

Given the centrality of ASEAN in this crisis, I will continue to engage ASEAN Member States and will seek to make a second trip to the region before the end of this year.

Finally, I urge every Member State to refocus their attention on the crisis in Myanmar, reassess their policies and actions and, choose action over indifference.

Action should include robust funding for humanitarian support through appropriate channels; coordinated measures to deprive the junta of the funds it needs to sustain its attacks; deepening engagement with the National Unity Government; and further support for accountability mechanisms.

Finally, action on Myanmar should be put to a vote in the Security Council. Even if a veto cannot be avoided, an open, transparent debate and vote will help to refocus international attention on this crisis.

Member States that are willing to stand with and for the people of Myanmar can do so with robust action in a strategic and coordinated manner.

Words of support for human rights in Myanmar, while welcome, should be matched by decisive action.

The stakes are just too high to do anything else.

Thank you, Mr. President.