



MYANMAR

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**Statement by Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun,
Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations
at the UN Security Council Open Debate on “Children and Armed Conflict”**

(New York, 19 July 2022)

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to thank the presidency of Brazil for convening today's high-level open debate on children and armed conflict. We welcome this year's focus on protection of displaced children, abduction and their reintegration. I also appreciate all the briefers for their insightful briefings. I particularly thank the Secretary General and his special representative Ms. Gamba for this year report on children and armed conflicts.

Mr. President,

The situation of children in armed conflict continues to be a great concern to all of us. The number of grave violations against children remains high with 22,645 violations committed in 2021 alone. Myanmar expresses its deep sympathy for over 19,000 children affected by those violations in conflict situations. We are saddened by the tragic loss of over 8,000 children lives as the result of the killing and maiming. On the other hand, we are encouraged by the release of over 12,000 children from armed groups as the result of the UN's engagement with parties to the conflicts.

We are particularly alarmed by the trends of increased impact of improvised explosive devices and mines on children, attacks on schools, the military use of schools and the significant rise in abduction of girls. As the Secretary-General rightly pointed out in the report, while the COVID-19 pandemic aggravated the vulnerabilities of children, the military coups have worsened their situation including in Myanmar.

Mr. President,

In Myanmar, the elected civilian Government strengthened the legal framework for child protection despite the constitutional constraint with regard to the armed conflicts. A new Child Rights Law was enacted. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 were ratified. The Government established an inter-

ministerial committee for the prevention of the six grave violations during armed conflicts. The Government fully cooperated with the United Nations entities including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

While supporting the UN led monitoring and reporting mechanism, the National Unity Government of Myanmar is committed to promoting and protecting the rights of the child, and is cooperating with relevant UN entities in this regard. NUG developed a set of guidelines on prevention and protection of children affected in armed conflict in Myanmar and an implementation plan in accordance with international laws and relevant UN Security Council resolutions. NUG submitted in March this year to the UN the report on the efforts of the NUG for promoting and protecting the rights of the child especially in situation in armed conflict, as well as the guidelines on CAAC.

Mr. President,

After the military perpetrated the illegal coup in February 2021 in Myanmar, the illegal military effectively destroyed the rule of law by lawlessly arresting, torturing and killing civilians including children in cold blood. Even with the elected civilian government and parliament in place, the military was the main perpetrator of grave violations against children. After the coup, no legal protection in place was able to prevent Myanmar children from the violence by the military which has no regard for domestic and international law.

The impact of conflict on children in Myanmar is indeed severe and deeply disturbing and heart breaking. In this year report, the United Nations verified 503 grave violations against 462 Myanmar children, most of which were committed by the military. The military killed and maimed 75 children, recruited and used 222, detained 87, raped 1 and abducted 10 children. They attacked schools and hospitals 17 times, used 52 schools and hospitals for military purposes and denied humanitarian access. These verified accounts in the report do not necessarily represent the full scale of attacks and violations by the military against the children. Since the coup, over 1,400 children have been arbitrarily arrested. Over 270 children remained in the military detention as of May this year. The military took children hostage to force their parents to surrender. Nearly 7.8 million children remain out of school. 250,000 out of over 1 million internal displaced persons in Myanmar are children.

Children retaining safe and access to quality education is another important matter. There is no doubt that attacks on schools and hospitals have destructive effects on children and societies in every way. To this end, the military has deliberately deprived children of their basic human rights to health, education, and development.

Mr. President,

In addition to the displacement of children within the country, many children together with their parents escaped from Myanmar to neighbouring countries to seek refuge. We are greatly concerned that they are now at high risk of becoming victims of human trafficking. Therefore, we are seeking UNHCR protection for them. Many of them are still awaiting effective actions from UNHCR. I hereby appeal to the international community to look into this matter seriously and timely and help them. Children must be protected under every circumstance. Every child deserves a future.

In conclusion, **Mr. President**, as we speak, the war that Myanmar military has waged on their own citizens including children continues. Unless the international community takes concrete action to protect Myanmar children from ongoing grave violations, we risk having a lost generation of children due to the coup-inflicted consequences.

Needless to say, the key root cause of the children's sufferings in Myanmar is the military junta's brutal attempt to do anything to assert control over the population who resoundingly continues to resist their illegal coup. With their culture of impunity, the military forces have proven that they are not reluctant to go to extreme length including by blatantly violating both domestic child rights law and the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. In this situation, the international community needs to protect children in Myanmar who have been victims of the military junta's widespread and systematic attacks against the civilian population.

Here I wish to urge the UN Security Council to take swift and decisive action, in accordance with its Charter responsibilities and children and armed conflict resolutions, to end military violence against children, stop military use of schools and hospitals and release all arbitrarily detained children. The Council must also do everything it can to bring the perpetrators of grave violations against children to justice and help aid workers get safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to children in need, especially those displaced by conflicts not only in Myanmar but also in other conflict situations. The Council must act now.

I thank you.
