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Junta Continues to Commit Atrocity Crimes Two Years After the Attempted Military Coup

Today marks two years since the attempted military coup in Burma. Over the last two years, the people of Burma have bravely resisted the junta's violent attempt to take total control of the country. In the face of mass, unwavering public resistance, the junta continues to increase its campaign of brutality and savagery as it carries out killings, torture, forced disappearances, sexual violence, and airstrikes against the civilian population throughout the country.

Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN) has so far documented from 1st February 2021 to 31st December 2022. According to the documentation, the total number of civilians killed by the junta reached 3160 people. There were 363 people who were tortured and killed within 24 hours of their arrest by the junta. Arson attacks by the junta forces on civilian properties across the country destroyed 46,350 houses. Sagaing Division has the largest rates of all the above-mentioned crimes committed by the junta. Freedom of religion and belief was also significantly violated during the period, with hundreds of religious buildings burned and destroyed, including Churches, Buddhist monasteries, and Mosques.

While these events have garnered international attention, other forms of structural violence and human rights violations of Burma's Muslim minorities has continued to occur largely under the radar, with particularly severe violations against the Rohingya people. Since the coup, Rohingya and other Muslim minorities have been subjected to tightened restrictions on their fundamental freedoms and are **increasingly at risk of being subjected to further atrocity crimes**.

Since the coup, the junta has imposed new movement restrictions and aid blockages on Rohingya camps and villages. The junta has arrested thousands of Muslims, hundreds of them children, for 'unauthorized' travel. Those arrested face a maximum of five years in prison. According to the Burma Human Rights Network's (BHRN) documentation from 1 February 2021 to December 2022, at least 2,840 Rohingya were arrested and detained for traveling outside their communities without getting prior permission showing a sharp uptick in the number of arrests since the coup. BHRN has also documented 70 cases of other Muslim minorities being arbitrarily arrested.

The junta and its supporters continue to use divisive and hateful rhetoric targeting non-Buddhist religious groups to divide the resistance and deflect and divert attention from the coup. While religious oppression has been a longstanding issue in Burma, the coup emboldened the junta to further persecute, marginalize, and incite violence against the Rohingya and other Muslim minorities throughout the country. From 1 February 2021 until January 2023, BHRN has documented over 539 incidents of hate-speech targeting Muslims by junta supporters on social media including Facebook, Telegram, and junta-backed journals.

BHRN and other human rights groups have also documented cases of the junta looting, burning and destroying properties, shops, and places of worship of Muslim communities. BHRN documentation shows that more than 770 houses in Muslim villages were burned down by the junta in Sagaing region since the start of the coup. BHRN documentation shows the junta has killed at least 81 Muslims since 1 February 2021.

“Amidst all this violence and brutality, the international response to the coup has proceeded in a slow and fragmented manner, falling short of the Burma people’s expectations. The longer the international community waits to act, the more emboldened the junta will become as it continues to commit atrocities. The situation in Myanmar requires an immediate and cohesive international response”, said **Kyaw Win, Executive Director of BHRN**.

The Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN) calls on governments worldwide to:

- Redouble efforts to pursue international legal action against the junta, including by joining the Gambia’s case at the International Court of Justice and by actively pursuing investigations and prosecutions under the principle of universal jurisdiction like those in Turkey, Argentina, and Germany.
- Work together to strengthen international sanctions to cut off the Burma military from the revenue funding its abusive operations.
- Increase engagement and recognize the National Unity Government, ethnic resistance organizations, and leaders of the civil disobedience movement.

Additionally, BHRN calls on:

- ASEAN to coordinate strong action against the junta, block the junta from all its meetings, and support UN member states in enforcing sanctions and a global arms embargo against the junta.
- Neighbouring countries, including India, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, to devise a comprehensive regional response to the refugee crisis, provide protection, support, and humanitarian and legal aid to all refugees fleeing Burma, and to authorize emergency cross-border aid to internally displaced persons in Burma.
- The UN Security Council (UNSC) to end its inaction and refer the situation in Burma to the International Criminal Court or establish a separate criminal tribunal to investigate and prosecute the full spectrum of atrocity crimes in Burma. The UNSC should also impose a binding global arms embargo including a prohibition on security assistance, the sale and transfer of arms, dual-use technology, and suspend the supply of aviation fuel.
- The international community to not recognise the pseudo-election that the junta plans to conduct in August this year. There must be recognition that the same junta that overthrew a Democratically elected government does not have any credibility to conduct the election.

Background on the Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN)

Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN) is based in London and operates across Burma/Myanmar works for human rights, minority rights and religious freedom in Burma. BHRN has played a crucial role advocating for human rights and religious freedom with politicians and world leaders.

Media Enquiries

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