Statement on World Press Freedom Day

3 May 2023

Brave journalists in Myanmar are risking their lives every day to expose the genocidal military's crimes against humanity in Myanmar. All independent media have been targeted and closed down by the brutal military junta for reporting the facts about atrocities, crimes, and in particular, crimes against humanity committed by the junta. Media freedom is absolutely essential, and is the cornerstone of democracy and human rights. We salute and express our heartfelt thanks to all journalists and independent media organisations working tirelessly for the cause of freedom, federal democracy, and human rights in Myanmar. It is vitally important that the international community support and promote independent media, especially those journalists who are taking on great personal risk to uncover and report the truth. The protection of freedom of speech is critical, and the people of Myanmar must be allowed their fundamental rights to freedom of expression. The brutal military is desperate to hide their crimes and massacres of which there have been well over 70 since attempted coup, and over 600 aerial bombardments.The most recent massacre in the Village of Pazigyi, Sagaing was a clear example of the brutal dictatorship's blatant violations of human rights in their campaign of terror, and a typical attempt to incinerate the victims and village to hide their crime from international eyes. We have seen the same pattern of behaviour against the Rohingya minority where the brutal military in their genocidal operation would repeatedly and brutally assault Rohingya villages, killing thousands and driving hundreds of thousands to flee, then attempt to cover up their crimes by incinerating the victims' bodies, homes, civilian properties and subsequently attempt to dupe the international media and community by falsifying reports and staging crime scenes.

Since the first of February 2021, this same genocidal military has killed nearly 4,000 innocent civilians, arrested more than 21,000 innocent people, and burned and destroyed more than 65,000 buildings, including homes, churches, schools, and monasteries. The only crimes their victims committed were yearning to be free, and demanding the right to free speech and expression to protest a murderous and corrupt military generals. The brutal junta have largely done this with impunity as they have implemented their infamous "four cuts policy" which begins with cutting off communication. Before committing their heinous crimes, the military will sever telephone and internet services in the target area so that victims cannot call for help or broadcast their plight to the world.

Despite the actions of the genocidal military, through the brave professional- and citizen-journalists of Myanmar, we have collected recorded evidence of over 10,000 attacks by the brutal military against the innocent people of Myanmar. These attacks have displaced more than 1.7 million people and driven ten times that number to hunger and starvation. In a country of 54 million people, nearly one third do not have sufficient food. Worse still, these attacks have claimed the lives of nearly 4,000 civilians so far, many of whom were killed by Russian and Chinese-made heavy weapons and jet fighters.

When rapportage on the Myanmar crisis dies, with it will die our hopes for humanity, democracy, and freedom. So today, we reiterate our sincerest appreciation to the brave journalists and brave citizens of Myanmar for continuing to record and report on the genocidal military's war crimes and crimes against humanity in Myanmar. Our solidarity with independent media in Myanmar is steadfast. Our commitment to democracy, human rights, press freedom, and freedom of speech is unwavering. Our resolve to protect our brave journalists and citizens is unshakeable.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sasa
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