



Special Advisory Council for MYANMAR

The Myanmar Military Used Helicopter Gunships to Murder Children Inside Their School and Must Be Held to Account

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The United Nations (UN) and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) can no longer wait to take action on the side of the Myanmar people after the Myanmar military junta committed its deadliest attack against children since the attempted coup began. Without action, then they are complicit in the junta's crimes, says the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (SAC-M).

At least 11 children were killed and 17 injured after junta air strikes against a school in a monastery in Let Yet Kone village in Tabayin Township, Sagaing Region of Myanmar on Friday, September 16.

The assault began when two junta helicopters fired machine guns and heavy weapons into the school in sustained fire which lasted for an hour. Junta troops then entered the monastic compound where the school is located and continued firing indiscriminately. The airstrikes could not have taken place without authorisation from commanders who report to Commander-in-Chief of the military, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing through their chain of command.

"The military junta attacked and killed the Let Yet Kone school children in cold blood. Altogether, the junta has killed, tortured or taken hostage hundreds of children since the attempted coup began, and driven thousands into displacement, hunger and fear," said Yanghee Lee of SAC-M. **"The United Nations and ASEAN are allowing this to happen. Children in Myanmar will continue to suffer and die at the hands of this barbaric military until it is stopped, and its leaders finally brought to justice. How many more innocent children need to be killed for the United Nations and ASEAN to take definite action?"**

For almost twelve months, the junta has waged a brutal offensive against communities in Sagaing in response to widespread popular resistance in the Region to the attempted coup. The relentless campaign has involved massacres of unarmed civilians, rape, arson, looting, destruction of food and medical supplies, and shelling of schools and places of worship.

The junta has resorted to the use of mass atrocities across the country in an effort to crush anti-coup resistance which has become entrenched nationwide.



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Resistance organisations, represented by the National Unity Government of Myanmar (NUG), control more of the territory of Myanmar than the junta and are expanding provision of services, including education, in those areas. But the resistance is yet to receive significant diplomatic, financial or humanitarian support from the international community.

“The attempted coup, which is the latest bloody manifestation of Myanmar’s military-induced crises, began twenty months ago,” said Marzuki Darusman of SAC-M. **“What has the United Nations done in that time, besides sending envoys and agency officials to shake hands with the junta? What has ASEAN done, besides making futile appeals to the junta? Where is the protection for the Myanmar people and their children? When the junta’s full crimes are finally accounted for, the glaring complicity of international actors will be laid bare.”**

The Myanmar military has never faced justice for its decades of atrocities committed against the Myanmar people, including attacks against children. The members of SAC-M have been calling, since before the attempted coup began, for the investigation and prosecution of Min Aung Hlaing and his senior generals for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Those calls grow more urgent by the day.

The NUG, as the legitimate government of Myanmar, has sought to advance accountability in Myanmar through international mechanisms. It has accepted the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court in Myanmar (ICC), dating back to 2002, by lodging a declaration with the Court under Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute

“The junta’s horrific attack on Let Yet Kone school last week is consistent with the military’s 70-year history of brutality and criminality,” said Chris Sidoti of SAC-M. **“Criminal accountability is needed to stop history from continuing to repeat itself. The generals fear justice – and rightly so. The ICC must act on the NUG’s article 12(3) declaration, which is now more than a year old.”**

To protect the lives of the Myanmar people and bring the leaders of the military junta to justice, SAC-M is calling on:

- The UN Security Council to put to a vote a resolution on Myanmar to impose a comprehensive global arms embargo on the junta, to impose targeted financial and economic sanctions against the junta, and to refer the situation in Myanmar to the ICC;
- The UN General Assembly to fully accept the credentials of Myanmar’s representative to the UN, NUG appointee Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun, with all





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the rights and privileges of any other member state, including representation in all other UN bodies and forums;

- ASEAN to engage formally with the NUG, accept the NUG as the representative of Myanmar in ASEAN meetings and forums, and use the ASEAN Summit in November to reach a new agreement on how to respond to the junta-made crises in Myanmar, developed in consultation with the NUG;
- UN officials, agencies and other humanitarian actors to cease all activities that grant legitimacy to the junta, including presenting credentials to Min Aung Hlaing and participating in photo opportunities with the generals and their collaborators, and adhere to humanitarian principles by engaging primarily with the NUG and resistance organisations;
- The ICC to accept the NUG's article 12(3) declaration accepting ICC jurisdiction in Myanmar dating back to 2002 and urgently expand the current investigation on the basis of the declaration.

