



Feb 1, 2023

European Call for Reinforcement of Myanmar Pro-Democratic Development Open Letter to the European Union and EU Member States

Dear President von der Leyen,

Dear HR/VP Borrell,

Dear President Michel,

Dear President Metsola,

On the occasion of the second anniversary of the coup d'état in Myanmar, we, the undersigned Myanmar diaspora organizations and organizations based in Europe that support democracy and federalism in Myanmar, call on the European Union and EU Member States to significantly increase their response to the human rights and humanitarian crisis being caused by one of the worst military regimes in the world.

The EU and its Member States have rightly shown remarkable unity, agility and resolute determination to support Ukraine against the criminal Russian aggression, as well as readiness to support Belarus' democratic movement after stolen elections and a brutal crackdown.

We expect and hope that the EU and its Member States can take a clear position towards the similar scale of suffering and equally heroic resistance by the people of Myanmar. While the EU and some Member States have taken important measures thus far, the military's atrocities and war of terror against the people of Myanmar deserve a more urgent response than is currently taken in the EU. That is why we call on the EU to take a stronger and more proactive position and to become more active in addressing the crisis in Myanmar.

The junta has failed to consolidate power and is gradually losing control to the determined and constantly growing resistance. In a very similar manner to Putin in Ukraine, the regime is primarily relying on violence, terror and the intentional targeting of the civilian population and civilian infrastructure. The military's two other strategies - to try to divide the anti-junta alliance through sham "peace talks"; and win legitimacy through manipulated fake elections - will not work either. However, every single additional month that the junta is able to continue this highly destructive and futile effort to seize power is causing deep economic and social damage that will be increasingly difficult to repair.

The EU has previously shown great support for the "democratic transition" in the decade prior to the coup, with hundreds of millions of Euros being invested in supporting the capacity of governance institutions, civil society and the peace process and in education

reform, justice sector reform, and much more. Yet, after the coup, almost all of the support was suspended, instead of continuing this critical support to the legitimate authorities of the country, currently represented by the CRPH, NUCC and NUG.

Despite having called for the results of the 2020 elections to be respected, the EU and its Member States have failed to properly engage and support the National Unity Government (NUG), the government appointed by the parliament elected in those very elections. The NUG, the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) and its allies including EROs and CSOs are the ones who are currently driving all the reforms of the country the EU has previously supported: democratisation, education, justice, health care, inclusion and an actual peace process with the first serious debates about federalism in the country since the military coup of 1962.

We therefore call upon the EU and its Member States:

- **To engage, cooperate with and fund the NUG, CRPH, NUCC, ethnic states' consultative councils** and other political representative bodies of the EROs to enable them to build their capacity. The broad alliance that stands behind the Federal Democratic Charter is the only grouping in Myanmar that, with support, can end both the current conflict and the decades of civil war and must be a key policy goal for the EU.

- We welcome recent higher level public meetings between the EU and EU Member States representatives and NUG representatives. However, in order to send a strong message to the Myanmar military and send a strong message of solidarity to the people of Myanmar, such meetings should now **take place at Prime Ministerial and Presidential level**.

- **Fund the NUG's and EROs' public services.** They have proven to be committed to providing services - health care, education, judiciary and more - that the military is intentionally denying and destroying. Significant EU funding will help consolidate these critically important services and go a long way to prevent an otherwise rapidly deepening state collapse.

- **Fund the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM)** because it is another pillar on which the revival of essential public services can and should be built. The junta is chasing, arresting, harassing and even torturing, imprisoning and killing members of the CDM, who are essential professionals needed for the reconstruction of the public sector.

- **Convene an emergency meeting of all Member States that support human rights in Myanmar**, as suggested by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Thomas H. Andrews, to launch a focused, coordinated, and strategic initiative to deprive the military of the weapons, finances, and legitimacy it utilizes to sustain its campaign of violence and the suppression of the democratic aspirations of the people of Myanmar.

- **Fund humanitarian aid through cross-border mechanisms** and local humanitarian and community-based organisations and remove stifling bureaucratic requirements that overburden local CSOs. Current over-reliance on the multi-lateral funding mechanisms administered through UNOPS and INGOs is failing to reach the most vulnerable segments of the population in the most urgent need. By massively scaling up aid to and through non-registered civil society organisations and cross border mechanisms, the EU will be able to reach millions of the most in need in the country.

- **Deny legitimacy**; make sure that the representatives of the illegal regime are not invited to official events funded or organized by EU and European states' bodies (e.g. International Peace and the Rule of Law project funded by the German Federal Foreign Office).
- **Send a clear message refuting the junta's electoral deception**; engage other partners, particularly in ASEAN, not to endorse or support the sham elections. The "electoral performance" will not fulfill the definition of a free and fair election since the representatives of political parties opposing the regime are being imprisoned, persecuted, exiled or killed. At the same time, any support for the elections is a violation of the 'do no harm' imperative since there has already been an increase in violence across the country to resist voter registration.
- **Support efforts in the UN Security Council to refer the Myanmar situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC)**, or establish an independent Ad-hoc Tribunal on Myanmar.
- **Call on the International Criminal Court (ICC)** to accept the declaration lodged by the NUG, under Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute, accepting the Court's jurisdiction with respect to international crimes committed within Myanmar territory.
- **Continue to support the International Court of Justice (ICJ) case of Gambia against Myanmar** in order to achieve full accountability for the crime of genocide against the Rohingya.
- **EU and Member States must do all they can to sanction aviation fuel**. Indiscriminate air attacks by helicopters and jets on the civilian population has resulted in thousands of deaths, countless more made homeless and has created a human rights and humanitarian crisis.
- **Increase the monitoring and enforcement of existing sanctions**. Continue the existing policy of regular new rounds of sanctions targeting sources of revenue and arms to the Myanmar military but significantly increase the pace of implementation. New sanction targets should be identified in cooperation with US and UK partners, and seek to persuade Australia, South Korea, Singapore and Japan to join the EU in new sanctions rounds.
- **Sanction Russian, Chinese, Indian and Pakistani companies supplying the Myanmar military with arms** and begin high level dialogue with India and Pakistan to persuade them to stop supplying arms to the Myanmar military.
- Introduce programs to assist democracy activists, journalists, and CSO actors who are persecuted by the junta and have fled to neighbouring countries where they have no safety. Such programs, including simplified visa granting, **relocations and humanitarian help should be thoroughly aimed, selective, coordinated and flexible**.
- EU and its Member States urgently need to prepare a coordinated policy on how to provide, in case of necessity, **protection to Myanmar passport holders** who are currently in the territory of the EU, particularly to those who are studying. There are clear signs that military embassies may soon deny Myanmar citizens abroad, who are only permitted two-year passports, the possibility of renewing their passports. This will pressure citizens of Myanmar into an involuntary and risky return to the country.

- Open a channel of communication and **consult with Myanmar diaspora organizations** based in Europe and European solidarity organizations, such as the ones undersigned in this letter.

We are aware that on many of these requests there has already been some welcome steps in the right direction, but these efforts need to be scaled up and sped up. Lessons learned from the appeasement of Putin and the current crisis in Ukraine should be applied to the crisis in Myanmar.

As these demands show, there is much the EU and its Member States can do to actively support the people of Myanmar in their struggle. While they will determine the future of their country, outside support can help tip the balance in their favour. The EU Parliament has already shown support for many of these demands - it is now up to the EU and its Member States to show similar determination. The fight against authoritarianism is global; a federal, democratic Myanmar instead of a dictatorship sponsored by Putin is in the EU's vital interests.

If the EU and its Member States apply just a small proportion of the determination they have shown in Ukraine to Myanmar as well, it would have a significant positive impact. The people of Myanmar, who have shown so much resilience and courage in their struggle for democracy, deserve it.

Yours sincerely,

German Solidarity with Myanmar Democracy e.V.

www.solidarity-myanmar.de

And:

Ah Nah Podcast - Conversations with Myanmar, Ireland

Asociace NUG.z.s., Czech Republic

Association Suisse-Birmanie, Switzerland

Associazione per l'Amicizia Italia Birmania Giuseppe Malpeli, Italy

Aung San Suu Kyi Park Norway

Burma Action Ireland

Burma Campaign UK

Burma Center Prague, Czech Republic

Burmese students in the Czech Republic

CEELI, Czech Republic

Central European Institute of Asian Studies (CEIAS), Slovakia, Czech Republic, Austria

Chin Community in Norway

CRPH - NUG Supporters Ireland

CRPH Funding Ireland

CRPH Support Group, Norway

CRPH, NUG Support Team Germany-Deutschland

Democratic Party for a New Society, Norway

Doh Atu - Ensemble pour le Myanmar, France

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Finland Karen Culture Association, Finland
Finland-Myanmar Association, Finland
Food & Help for Burma/Myanmar, Switzerland
Forum 2000 Foundation, Czech Republic
Info Birmanie, France
International Association. Myanmar-Switzerland
Kachin Association Norway
Karen Community in Netherlands
Karen Swedish Community, Sweden
Karenni Association Norway
Karenni Society Finland
K'cho Ethnic Association, Norway
La Communauté Birmane de France
Matu Burma Foundation, Norway
Myanmar Action Group Denmark
Myanmar Baptist Churches in Norway
Myanmar Catholic Community in Norway
Myanmar Community Austria
Myanmar Community in Norway
Myanmar Community in the Czech Republic
Myanmar Democratic Force Denmark
Myanmar Diaspora Group, Finland
Myanmar Hindu Community, Norway
Myanmar Muslim Organization, Norway
Netherlands-Myanmar Solidarity Platform, Netherlands
NLD Organization Committee (International), Norway
Norway Falam Community, Norway
Norway Matu Community, Norway
Norway Rvwang Community, Norway
NUG and CRPH Supporters Denmark
Padauk, Finland
Rohingya Community in Norway
Support Group for Democracy in Myanmar, Netherlands
Swedish Burma Committee, Sweden
Swiss Solidarity for democracy for Burma/Myanmar, Switzerland
Transparency International Czech Republic
With Myanmar, UK
Youth for democratization of Myanmar (UDM), Norway
Zin Documentaire B.V., Netherlands
Zomi Christian Fellowship of Norway
Zomi Community Norway