

EU Statement – United Nations General Assembly: Myanmar

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Statements on behalf of the EU

26 February 2021, New York – Statement by H.E. Ambassador Olof Skoog, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, at the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Informal meeting of the Plenary on Myanmar

Mr President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia^{*}, Montenegro^{*}, Serbia^{*} and Albania^{*}, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement. The countries of Monaco and San Marino also align with this statement.

Mr President,

The will of the people of Myanmar was clearly expressed at the general election of 8 November 2020.



The results of the election must be respected and any attempt to overturn them by force or by any other means must be rejected. Any allegation of voting irregularities has to be settled within the proper legal and administrative channels.

The European Union condemns in the strongest terms the military coup in Myanmar and all violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We welcome the strong statements of the Secretary-General, including at the opening of the Human Rights Council session on Monday. He called on the Myanmar military to stop the repression immediately.

The military coup on 1 February has pushed Myanmar's democratic transition back several years. We call on the military authorities to immediately end the state of emergency, restore the legitimate civilian government and allow the newly elected parliament to open with the participation of all elected representatives.

We also call for the immediate and unconditional release of President U Win Myint, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, all those sentenced and arbitrarily arrested, those detained for peacefully expressing their views, as well as civilian and political leaders, journalists, human rights activists and other members of civil society. We are also deeply concerned about the crackdown on freedom of expression, including through internet blackouts and draconian changes to the law that repress free speech and press.

We call on the Myanmar military to guarantee unimpeded telecommunications, freedom of expression - online and offline, freedom of association and assembly, as well as access to information

The peaceful demonstrations across the country clearly demonstrate that the people of Myanmar reject the illegal seizure of power by the Myanmar military. The use of violence by the military and police against the peaceful demonstrators is appalling and we offer our condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives.

Military authorities and security forces must refrain from all violence against peaceful demonstrators, end the systematic targeting of members of the civil society, including human rights defenders, demonstrators, doctors and journalists, exercise utmost restraint, and swiftly bring those responsible for the violence to justice. A culture of impunity has shielded the military and security forces in Myanmar for too long. It must end.



We reiterate our support to the mandate of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar to collect evidence and build criminal case files wherever they see indication of serious international crimes or violations of international law.

We must also not forget the past grave violations of international law and the ongoing discrimination against ethnic minorities, including the Rohingya, who have long suffered brutal attacks by the military and by non-state actors.

The EU is committed to continue providing humanitarian assistance in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence to those in need both in Myanmar and across the region, including to the Rohingya. We call upon all parties, including the military authorities, to facilitate free, safe and unhindered access of humanitarian and medical organisations and workers to all people in need. We stand ready to step up our humanitarian assistance: the European Commission just announced 39 million euros of humanitarian aid for affected communities in Bangladesh and in Myanmar.

We recall that Myanmar must address the root causes of conflict, especially in Rakhine State, and create conditions necessary for the safe, voluntary, sustainable and dignified return of refugees and displaced persons. This also includes ensuring adequate assistance including health services and education, and access to justice to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

Mr. President,

The European Union and its Member States strongly support Myanmar's civilian and democratic transition, as well as its peace process and national reconciliation, and inclusive socio-economic development.

We will continue to work with all those willing to support Myanmar's path towards democracy, the rule of law and human rights, including freedom of assembly, association, expression and access to information.

We stress the importance of the Security Council's active attention to the situation in Myanmar.



We support all initiatives to facilitate dialogue that would lead to de-escalation and a political solution, and we call on the international community, and main regional actors and organisations, especially ASEAN, to work towards this end.

In this spirit, the EU called, together with the UK, a Special Session of the Human Rights Council on 12 February, which confirmed the deep concern of the international community about the human rights violations in Myanmar. The EU will also present a resolution at the ongoing 46th session of the Human Rights Council demanding to strengthen the UN mandates in order to ensure the accountability for those responsible for human rights violations.

The EU calls on Myanmar to fully implement the provisional measures following the International Court of Justice's order in the case lodged by The Gambia against Myanmar on the application of the Genocide Convention, as is compulsory under international law. The EU also takes note of the International Criminal Court's authorization of the Prosecutor to investigate alleged crimes within the Court's jurisdiction.

The EU fully supports the efforts of UN Special Envoy Schraner Burgener to create space for dialogue and facilitate de-escalation of the crisis. We urge the military authorities to allow her prompt and unimpeded entry into the country and ensure her access to all stakeholders, including President U Win Myint and Aung San Suu Kyi.

The EU is preparing targeted sanctions against those responsible for the coup if efforts for a dialogue solution fail, while avoiding measures which could adversely affect the people of Myanmar, especially the most vulnerable. We will keep all other policy options under review in order to ensure that the legitimate civilian authorities are restored and that Myanmar is brought back on to a path towards democracy.

* *The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

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