**Devastating Report on the UN Response to Myanmar Coup Finds Systematic, Structural and Leadership Failures**

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**London, 27 June 2021:**  The UN system has been “bereft of leadership, direction and coherence at multiple levels” in responding to the crisis following the military coup in Myanmar on 1 February, according to a new report by Damian Lilly, Director of Protection at the London-based Myanmar Accountability Project (MAP) and published by the International Peace Institute, an influential New York based think tank.

Lilly says the UN system “faces systematic, structural and leadership challenges, when responding to atrocity crimes” and that “the UN’s response to the human rights crisis in Myanmar has been woefully inadequate”.

The report presents compelling new evidence of how the UN failed to act as nearly 900 people were killed, over 5,000 people were detained or forcibly disappeared and 230,000 people were displaced by what the report says is a “terror campaign” by the Myanmar security forces against its own people.

The report, based on field research and interviews with officials dealing with the crisis, is deeply critical of UN member states such as Russia and China, major arms suppliers to Myanmar. They have stymied robust action by the UN Security Council, such as referring the coup leaders to the International Criminal Court or imposing an arms embargo, as the UN General Assembly demanded last Friday.

The report also accuses the UN team within Myanmar of being “unable or unwilling” to respond adequately to human rights violations and implement “basic protection measures such as legal aid, psychosocial support, and case management for the thousands of civilians who have been impacted by the violence.” In Yangon and major cities where protests have taken place, the UNHCR-led protection cluster made up of major humanitarian actors, has not even been activated.

“The UN has been a passive bystander and complicit observer of crimes against humanity committed on an industrial scale,” said Chris Gunness, Director of MAP, a London-based NGO fighting for justice for the people of Myanmar through national courts. “After the Rohingya genocide nearly five years ago, an independent inquiry by the veteran diplomat Gert Rosenthal, found the UN had failed to respond adequately to the unfolding tragedy. The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, accepted the findings of the Rosenthal report, but has done nothing to implement its findings and today the UN stands accused of the same failings as the military junta acts with impunity.”

The Lilly report demands that the UN redouble its efforts to address the crisis, including outlining a coherent political strategy, providing clear and bold leadership, increasing human rights monitoring, scaling up protection services and giving effective support to civil society groups inside Myanmar.

“Ultimately, meaningful change will only come from within Myanmar,” said Lilly. “The people of Myanmar will decide their own fate, but the world also has a responsibility to protect them. With the country sliding towards full scale conflict and state collapse, and with Covid spreading alarmingly, a robust international response is imperative. The price of the UN failing to act now will be incalculable.”

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