

## **Landmark Legal Opinion Calls on UN General Assembly to Accept the Credentials of Myanmar's National Unity Government and Reject the Junta**

*Press Release from the Myanmar Accountability Project for immediate publication*

**London 13 September 2021:** The United Nations General Assembly must accept the credentials of Myanmar's National Unity Government whose members were ousted in a military coup on 1 February, and reject those of the junta. This is the recommendation of a landmark legal opinion (link) signed by some of the world's most eminent international law experts and drafted in conjunction with the London-based NGO, the Myanmar Accountability Project, MAP.

"When the UN General Assembly meets this week, the Myanmar junta is expected to make an attempt to oust the current Ambassador from his seat," according to MAP Director, Chris Gunness. "The junta have written to the UN Secretary-General, demanding that its credentials should be accepted in his place. However, we have analysed every key credentials challenge in the UN's history and there is an overwhelming case against the junta."

"In the last three decades, the General Assembly has consistently refused to accept the credentials of regimes that have come to power by overthrowing democratically elected governments and which have a poor track record on democracy and human rights," Gunness added. "This is a crucial moment in resolving Myanmar's post-coup crisis. Rejection of the junta and recognition of the National Unity Government, could be a real turning point."

Since the coup, the Myanmar junta has inflicted on its own people what the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar has called "a brute force reign of terror", likely amounting to crimes against humanity.

Over one thousand people have been killed and over six thousand have been arbitrarily detained, including elected parliamentarians, with many tortured to death in detention. Armed conflict has intensified, displacing 230,000 people. The country is now experiencing a major humanitarian crisis, exacerbated by the Covid pandemic.

MAP's Director of Protection, Damian Lilly said "the decision before the UN General Assembly will have profound implications for the people of Myanmar. Accepting the military junta's credentials would entrench the regime further, giving it a green light for continued repression and potentially undermining international and regional mediation efforts."

The legal opinion sets out compelling arguments to accept the credentials of the NUG. It is appointed by members of parliament decisively elected in elections last November. The NUG's founding document, the Federal Democracy Charter, lays out a roadmap for a democratic government, and commits the NUG to diversity and the inclusion of all ethnic nationality groups.

"For too long the UN has failed the people of Myanmar. Accepting the NUG's credentials provides an historic opportunity to act decisively in support of democracy and human rights in the country," said Lilly. "A vote for the NUG would send a powerful signal to the people of Myanmar that UN member states have not forgotten their plight and stand with them."

Ends

You can find the legal opinion at the following link: [Legal Opinon: the Representation of the State of the Union of Myanmar at the United Nations - Myanmar Accountability Project \(the-world-is-watching.org\)](https://www.the-world-is-watching.org/legalsite/2021/09/13/landmark-legal-opinion-calls-on-un-general-assembly-to-accept-the-credentials-of-myanmar-s-national-unity-government-and-reject-the-junta/)

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