

Burma

UN Rights Expert Slams International Community for failing Myanmar People

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A United Nations (UN) human rights expert has slammed the international community for its inability to tackle the Myanmar junta's brutal campaign of violence against the people of Myanmar.

Tom Andrews, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, made the comments at a UN human rights council meeting on June 29. He told the member states that since his last report to the council three months ago, the military regime's atrocities against civilians had not only continued but escalated, while stressing the shocking violence against children.

Over 2,500 civilians have now been killed by the junta in its lethal campaign against its opponents, while more than 11,000 people have been detained and 1.1 million people are internally displaced in Myanmar, said Mr. Andrews.

The junta has also announced that the executions of political prisoners on death row will go ahead soon.

"The military has trained its guns on growing numbers of villagers and other non-combatants....and accelerated a brutal campaign of arson and murder in the northwest," said the UN Special Rapporteur.

He added that regime forces have relentlessly bombed villages with fighter jets and attack helicopters, as well as launching artillery strikes, killing men, women and children.

"In my view these repeated attacks on civilians — as well as other grave human rights violations — constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes," a top independent human rights council-appointed investigator said, while warning that the international community's failure to stop those crimes "will be a death sentence for untold numbers of people".

Children killed and tortured

"At least 382 children have been killed or maimed; more than 1,400 children have been arbitrarily detained...142 children have been tortured since the coup," said Mr. Andrews.

"These children have been beaten, cut and stabbed; they have been burned with cigarettes; they have had their fingernails and teeth pulled out; they have been forced to hold stress positions; they have been subjected to mock executions; they have been sexually assaulted," he said.

At least 61 children are currently being held hostage by the junta in an attempt to force their adult

relatives to give themselves up, he added.

Mr. Andrews warned recently that “Myanmar children are at risk of becoming a lost generation” unless immediate steps are taken to protect them from the mounting violence perpetrated by the junta.

He shared his recent conversation with a teenage Myanmar girl who told him her greatest hope is “to have a good night’s sleep, without fear, without hearing the sound of bombs and guns.”

The UN expert added that 33,000 children in Myanmar could die of preventable deaths this year alone, as they have missed routine immunizations, while five million children require urgent humanitarian assistance.

“The devastating and deteriorating conditions in Myanmar should lead to only one conclusion: the international community’s current approach to the crisis in Myanmar is not working,” he said while urging the world to take action.

“The people of Myanmar continue to wait for the Security Council to even consider a resolution about Myanmar,” he said.

He added that some UN member states have failed to impose sanctions on the junta, even when they have done so in response to other crises, while those who have adopted sanctions have too often failed to strategically coordinate those sanctions.

The Special Rapporteur also stated that many countries have failed to target the junta’s largest sources of revenue and their ability to move funds around.

Ko Tayzar San, a prominent anti-regime leader, told The Irrawaddy that the international community has failed to effectively support the Myanmar revolution, despite the fact that it has now been going on for over a year.

“Thousands have been killed. Tens of thousands have been imprisoned. And people continue to face daily arson attacks and killings. Yet there is no effective international support to protect them. And no serious action has yet been taken against [the regime],” said Ko Tayzar San.

However, the anti-coup activist said that all ethnic brothers and sisters across the country will keep fighting together for their freedom and to build a federal democracy.

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