Mass Killing of Civilians in Burma Demands Responsibility to Protect

15 March 2021 – London/Yangon -- The continued mass killing of civilians by the Burmese security forces requires firm and quick action by the international community. On March 14 at least 60 civilians were killed by security forces and the death tools continue rising on 15th March too. Martial law was declared in Hlaing Tharyar, Shwe Pyithar, South Dagon, North Dagon, Dagon Harbour and North Okkalapa Townships and violence against protesters continued in other districts in Yangon, many of them lower-income areas. At the same time the Military continues to frequently block internet access in order to hide its crimes and prevent protesters from organizing. As nations around the world condemn the actions of the Burmese security forces, their actions in response remain lacking. BHRN calls on the UN Security Council to evoke Responsibility to Protect to prevent any further bloodshed as the Tatmadaw's crimes against humanity increase each day.

"The situation on the ground is worsening each day and intervention is desperately needed to protect the civilians of Burma from the criminal military regime. The attacks on civilians are especially despicable because they occur most against the young, the poor, and the minorities. The UN cannot repeat the same mistakes it made when it failed the Rohingya and must take decisive action now to prevent a terrible situation from becoming even worse," said BHRN's Executive Director, Kyaw Win.

UN should immediately hold General Assembly to demand collective action in response to the military's widespread and systematic attack on peaceful protesters. The Responsibility to Protect is a commitment agreed to by all UN member states and calls for action to prevent crimes against humanity from occurring. Disfunction in the UN, and UN Security Council, in particular, have prevented them from taking any decisive action on several emergencies around the world in recent years. As the situation continues to deteriorate in Burma, the citizens cannot afford for the UN to fail again.

BHRN calls on Burma to end all hostilities against civilians and to allow the elected Parliament to resume. If the UN fails to enact any meaningful measures to protect the civilians of Burma then individual states must take action themselves and make clear to Burma that all options are on the table if the violence does not end. Condemnations do nothing to save lives when actions are needed. Sanctions against the military's financial interests must be heavily increased, an arms embargo must be enforced, and further steps to thwart the military and police from harming civilians must be outlined. Most importantly, more states must demonstrate their support financially and tactically for the Civil Disobedience Movement and the legitimate representatives of the Committee for Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Organisation's Background

BHRN is based in London, operates across Burma and works for human rights, minority rights and religious freedom in Burma. BHRN has played a crucial role advocating for human rights and religious freedom with politicians and world leaders.

Media Enquiries

Please contact:
Kyaw Win, Executive Director
Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN)
E: kyawwin@bhrn.org.uk
T: +44(0) 740 345 2378