



Special Advisory Council for MYANMAR

Junta Continues to use Sexual and Gender-Based Violence to Terrorise Civilian Population

19 May 2021: As the military junta continues to wage a campaign of terror against the peoples of Myanmar, the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (SAC-M) says that sexual and gender-based violence remains a brutal strategy employed by the junta to terrorise and punish the civilian population.

In recent weeks, serious allegations have emerged of the use of sexual and gender-based violence against women, girls and transgender people detained by the military junta in Myanmar. Since the junta launched a coup on 1 February, its forces have unlawfully detained more than 5,000 people across the country.

Reports include cases of rape and other violent and forced sexual acts, beatings and harassment. Serious cases of women and girls being subjected to sexual and gender-based violence and harassment by junta soldiers and police in public, during protests or in their communities have also been reported.

“The military junta deliberately uses sexual violence to cause extreme physical and mental suffering,” says Yanghee Lee, founding member of SAC-M. **“It has used this strategy as a weapon of war against Myanmar’s ethnic nationalities for decades. Now the entire population of Myanmar is witnessing the true nature of Min Aung Hlaing’s terrorist junta.”**

In 2019, the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar found that Tatmadaw soldiers routinely and systematically employed rape, gang rape and other violent and forced sexual acts against women, girls, boys, men and transgender people.

SAC-M founding members, Marzuki Darusman and Chris Sidoti, were members of the Fact-Finding Mission, which conducted interviews with hundreds of survivors and witnesses of sexual violence in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States.

The Mission concluded that sexual violence perpetrated by the military was part of a deliberate, well-planned strategy to intimidate, terrorise and punish a civilian population. It called to action the Government of Myanmar, the Security Council and the international community to make accountability for these grave crimes an urgent priority.

On 29 April, Myanmar's National Unity Government announced its commitment to a zero-tolerance policy for crimes of sexual and gender-based violence and its intention to investigate allegations and document incidents to bring justice for victims.

SAC-M continues to call for a global 'three cuts' strategy against the junta: cut the arms supply through a comprehensive global arms embargo, cut the cash flow through targeted economic sanctions, and cut impunity by referring the situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court.

The people of Myanmar are fighting to free themselves from the junta's grip once and for all. Justice for the junta's many victims of sexual and gender-based violence is essential to that fight.