



There are reasons for optimism, one year on from the attempted coup

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The Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (SAC-M) hosted a press conference yesterday, Thursday 27 January 2022. The scale and gravity of the crisis in Myanmar cannot be overstated, yet the members of SAC-M said there are reasons for optimism, even as the crisis caused by Min Aung Hlaing's failed coup enters its second year.

"Min Aung Hlaing tried to seize power over Myanmar on 1st of February last year. One year later, he has not succeeded. Why has he not succeeded? Why has he failed? Because the people of Myanmar resisted," said Yanghee Lee, SAC-M founding member and former UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar.

Yanghee Lee told the press conference that the resistance movement which manifested within days of the attempted coup has since become a democratic revolution. Lee highlighted the achievements of the revolution, including the announcement of a Federal Democratic Charter, appointment of the National Unity Government and formation of People's Administration Committees.

These achievements have come at a heavy cost, with Min Aung Hlaing's troops becoming more and more barbaric as his desperation grows. The intensity of violence in Myanmar has escalated in the last four months to outpace that of other global flashpoints Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen and Iraq.

Marzuki Darusman, SAC-M founding member and former chair of the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, echoed Lee's sentiment, however. **"This is a nation that is in a historic process of re-envisioning itself towards a federal democracy. Historically, when a nation comes onto that track nothing can stop it, not even the junta,"** he said.

Darusman said that among the reasons for optimism are the total de-legitimation of the junta, the pull-out of major corporations, and the growing recognition of the National Unity Government in the international community.

The international system itself meanwhile was criticised for failing to act. Chris Sidoti, SAC-M founding member and former member of the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission, said that inaction has been the characteristic of the international response, but that there is an opportunity for change.

Sidoti told the press conference that the UN Security Council needs to accept its responsibility under the UN Charter for international peace and security and pass a resolution on Myanmar that would see the three cuts – cut the weapons, cut the cash, cut the impunity – imposed on the military junta. He also called on the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice to welcome the National Unity Government as the representatives of the people of Myanmar and cooperate with them in their investigations, prosecutions and litigations.

"We in the international system have the opportunity of being on the side of the people of Myanmar," said Sidoti. **"The victory of the people is clear, it will occur, but how will the international system be judged when the history of these years is written?"**

