



Special Advisory Council for MYANMAR

UN Secretary-General repeating cycle of UN failure in Myanmar

21 March 2022: The United Nations (UN) Secretary General's dismissal of the crisis in Myanmar and past UN failure is shameful and plays to the advantage of the Myanmar military, says the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar (SAC-M).

In 2019, an [independent inquiry](#) into UN involvement in Myanmar from 2010 to 2018 found that “systemic and structural failures” rendered the UN system impotent in the face of massive human rights violations, including the genocidal atrocities committed against the Rohingya by the Myanmar military. Myanmar is now being subjected to a nationwide attack by that same military, which has been trying – and failing – to gain control over the country for the past thirteen months and has driven Myanmar to become a [human rights catastrophe](#). In this context, the UN Secretary-General [issued a report](#) to the UN Human Rights Council last week on progress made in implementing the recommendations of the inquiry.

“The Secretary General’s report shamefully dismisses the scale and gravity of the current crisis in Myanmar and provides no information on how the UN is actually responding inside the country,” said Yanghee Lee of SAC-M. **“The report highlights the reinvigorated role of the UN Resident Coordinators – the top in-country UN official – as the centre piece of UN system reform but fails to mention that Myanmar has not had a Resident Coordinator for extended periods over the past four years. The position is currently vacant and has been for six months. The report merely reads like an advertisement for the work the UN is doing in various countries, not in Myanmar where a brutal coup is still taking place.”**

The Secretary General’s report was presented to the Human Rights Council by the UN Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, in the absence of a Resident Coordinator for Myanmar. The ASG seemed ill-informed of the situation in Myanmar and provided inaccurate information to Member States during the interactive dialogue by stating that the military is the de facto authority.

“It is simply not the case that the military is the de facto authority in Myanmar. The majority of the territory is not under the military’s control, and it has no ability to exercise ordinary government functions,” said Marzuki Darusman of SAC-M. **“It is no wonder the UN system continues to fail the people of Myanmar, even in their gravest hour of need, if the entire response is**

predicated on a false assumption that serves only the military. The UN is evidently partial to the junta.”

The people of Myanmar and allied democratic actors under the National Unity Government of Myanmar continue to resist the military’s onslaught and defend their democracy at huge personal cost, as the military inflicts atrocities that likely amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes across the country. The Government has sought to engage with the International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice to halt the atrocities and bring the leaders of the military to justice, but their efforts have so far been ignored.

“The Secretary General, heads of UN agencies and UN Member States need to ask themselves just whose side they are on,” said Chris Sidoti of SAC-M. **“Is it the people of Myanmar and their elected representatives? Or is it the leaders of a brutal military who should be prosecuted for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes? As things currently stand, the answer to that is not clear at all.”**