

## Myanmar: The junta abuses and tortures detained women

**25 May 2021:** According to recent reports, Myanmar's military junta uses torture and sexual violence against detained women. Victims complained about heavy beatings, sexual abuse during interrogations, misogynistic insults, and death threats.

Since the military coup on 1 February 2021, the junta has cracked down on protests and committed serious human rights violations including torture, arbitrary detention, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. Myanmar's army is also known for using sexual violence to crush minority communities at the border regions.

Despite the military's threats, a nonviolent civil disobedience movement emerged nationwide, and millions started demonstrating in hundreds of townships. Myanmar is a conservative country with rigid gender roles and widespread gender-based violence. However, young women rose up and played a crucial role in the protests. They took to the streets and demanded the restoration of democracy.

Since the protests began, more than 750 people were killed, and more than 3700 people were detained according to civil society organisations. Local human rights defenders reported that even children had been arrested, detained, tortured and killed and that prisoners were left to die without necessary medical care.

Many countries and international organisations have condemned the coup, but only a few of them have taken concrete steps to pressure the military junta and its economic interests. We urge the international community to impose a comprehensive global arms embargo on Myanmar to prevent further human rights violations against peaceful protesters and opponents to the military rule.

We ask the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to take concrete steps to prevent further human rights abuses against the people of Myanmar. It is the role of Southeast Asian leaders to promote regional stability and the respect for the rule of law in the region.

This statement is supported by individuals and organisations that are members of the SOS-Torture Asia Litigators' Group and the Women and Torture Working Group, namely

1. Advocacy Forum Nepal
2. Asia Justice and Rights (AJR)
3. Cambodian Centre for Human Rights (CCHR) – Cambodia
4. Civil Society and Human Rights Network (CSHRN) – Afghanistan
5. Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS) – Indonesia
6. Cristina Sevilla – Philippines
7. Cross Cultural Foundation – Thailand

8. Human Rights Office Kandy – Sri Lanka
9. Human Rights Organization of Nepal (HURON)
10. Mannar Women's Development Federation – Sri Lanka
11. Masum – India
12. Muna Baig – Pakistan
13. Muslim Women Development Trust – Sri Lanka
14. Odhikar - Bangladesh
15. Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA)
16. Psychological Responsiveness NGO – Mongolia
17. Shreen Abdul Saroor – Sri Lanka
18. Upul Kumarapperuma – Sri Lanka
19. Women in Struggle for Empowerment (WISE) – Pakistan
20. Women's Action Network Sri Lanka
21. World Organisation against Torture (OMCT)
22. Youth for Human Rights Documentation (YHRD) – India

***The following organisations are members of the SOS-Torture Asia Litigators' Group:***

*Advocacy Forum Nepal; Cross Cultural Foundation, Thailand; GongGam Human Rights Law Foundation; Human Rights Alert Manipur; Human Rights Office Kandy; Human Rights Organisation of Nepal (HURON); Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation; Justice Project Pakistan; KontraS; Maldivian Democracy Network; Odhikar; Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA); Quill Foundation; Right to Life; "Spravedlivost" (Justice) Jalal-Abad Human Rights Organization; Women in Struggle for Empowerment (WISE).*

***The following organisations are members of the Women and Torture Working Group:***

*Advocacy Forum Nepal, Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons, Association of Women for Awareness and Motivation (AWAM), Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM), Cambodian Centre for Human Rights, Civil Society and Human Rights Network (CSHRN), National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP), Odhikar, Psychological Responsiveness NGO, "Spravedlivost" (Justice) Jalal-Abad Human Rights Organization, Women's Action Network*