

Burma

Myanmar's Shadow Govt Urges Int'l Community to Step Up Support

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Myanmar's parallel National Unity Government (NUG) has asked the international community to urgently provide material support to help end the junta's daily atrocities and violence against the people, as the death toll at the hands of junta forces exceeded 2,000 this week.

"To date we have received no material assistance from the international community. We call again for the international community to listen to the will of the people of Myanmar and help end this military reign of terror against the people," Dr. Sa Sa, NUG spokesperson and Union Minister of International Cooperation, said at an online press conference on Wednesday.

"Material support is the fastest way to end this crisis and to free Myanmar," he added.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), a rights group, the number of innocent civilians brutally killed by junta forces exceeded 2,000 on Tuesday and more than 14,000 people have been arrested. Those killed include around 400 children, in addition to students, striking civil servants, peaceful protesters and bystanders.

According to another monitoring group, Data for Myanmar, junta forces have also torched more than 18,800 civilian houses across the country since the February 2021 coup as part of the regime's campaign to terrorize the population.

"Even if we get a fraction of the help from international governments that they are providing to Ukraine, we will win. There will be a democratic country in Asia. It will stop people suffering. We do need material and equipment that can stop the military regime, which is killing its own people," said NUG spokesperson and Minister of Communications, Information and Technology Htin Lin Aung.

Unlike Myanmar's poorly armed home-grown resistance fighters, Ukrainian forces have received weapons and aid from a number of countries, including the US and the UK, to combat the Russian military.

Speaking at Wednesday's press conference, Dr. Sa Sa said that since the war in Ukraine broke out, Myanmar's opposition forces have found it more difficult to get heard on the international stage.

"People of Myanmar and people of Ukraine are the same. We are fighting for freedom. We are fighting for democracy," he said.

Myanmar's UN envoy joined other delegates in voting to condemn Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, and the people of Myanmar have shown their solidarity with Ukrainians' fight for democracy and attempts to defend their country.

“What we ... ask is ‘Please don’t forget us.’ Myanmar’s 54 million people are suffering for the last 17 months while Ukraine has been three months. Just imagine, even just one day is too much for us now. Just one hour is too much for us now,” he said.

Dr. Sa Sa added that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) should learn from Ukraine’s European neighbors, which have been providing it with assistance and welcoming refugees. He called on the Southeast Asian regional bloc to engage with all stakeholders and not just with the junta.

NUG President’s Office spokesperson U Kyaw Zaw echoed Dr. Sa Sa’s call, saying the people of Myanmar need stronger action and assistance, including defensive support and cross-border humanitarian aid from regional and international actors, similar to the support that has been supplied to Ukraine.

The spokesperson also expressed the NUG’s disappointment at ASEAN for allowing a junta minister to attend this week’s ASEAN Defense Ministers’ meeting just days after a video emerged in which Myanmar junta soldiers openly admit to brutally killing people—some by slitting their throats—after detaining 26 civilians in Sagaing’s Ye U Township.

“Couple days later, ASEAN allowed the murderous military council representative to attend [the meeting] and shaking hands with them. It is a shame,” U Kyaw Zaw said.

He added that the NUG appreciated moves by some ASEAN member countries to start engaging with the shadow government’s ministers, singling out Malaysia, which has openly called on other ASEAN countries to publicly engage with the NUG as Myanmar’s legitimate government.

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