



## ***Commemoration of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture***

### ***Stop Torture, End Impunity***

26 June 2022

On this 'International Day in Support of Victims of Torture', we call for an immediate end to the brutal torture and mistreatment of civilians by the military junta and other armed groups.

Today marks the entry into force of the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which was a major step for the protection of fundamental rights under international law.

Tragically, for people in Burma, this international treaty does not offer any protection. The military junta makes brutal use of torture, continuously violating our dignity and destroying our social fabric.

Our organisations have documented the use of these barbaric methods since the 2021 coup, through first-hand testimonies and open-source documentation. Our documentation reveals the use of physical violence, threats, and other forms of psychological torture to punish and terrorize opponents of military rule.

Horrific methods of torture include the use of guns, sticks, knives and plyers, showing a complete disregard for individual human life, and an intent to create a climate of fear and terror through mutilations.

Since 1 February 2021, (95) protestors and activists have been tortured to death in interrogation centres and prisons by the military junta. Torture is not only used against prominent activists. It is military policy to torture all civilian political detainees. Every political detainee will have been physically or mentally tortured.

Mock executions and burials, stress positions, gender-based threats, deprivation of food and water for days, being forced to drink toilet water: recent forms of torture mirror a pattern of techniques experienced personally by former political prisoners in past uprisings.

Since the coup (2021) persons have been killed under the detention of junta personnel, this includes those tortured to death in interrogation, civilian villagers shot or beaten to death after being captured, or political prisoners who died from neglect, as well as resistance fighters, captured in conflict zones. It is now common practice for the military to torture, extract information and enact revenge, before summarily executing with gunshots.

Sexual violence by security forces is also recognised as a form of torture under international law. In Burma, rape is used as a weapon of war by the military to intimidate, terrorize, and subjugate civilian populations. In the context of post-coup repression, there are also reports of sexual abuses during detention and interrogation, including beatings on genitals and sexual threats.

We call attention to the historic use of torture by the military junta as a direct result of the impunity it enjoyed for decades. The lack of accountability for the systematic use of torture and other atrocities in the past has clearly emboldened atrocity perpetrators to take over the democratic process and unfold this brutal wave of repression against the people.

Hollow threats by international governments and regional blocs must end. UN member states, including ASEAN, must put much more political pressure on the military junta and use the most important avenue for political pressure at this time, known as the [three-cuts strategy](#)<sup>1</sup>. In particular, international actors must:

- Refuse engagement, dialogue, or participation in activities which lend legitimacy to the military junta.
- Implement a comprehensive global arms embargo.
- Implement targeted financial sanctions against military conglomerates and other pro-military business interests.
- Support the work of accountability mechanisms, such as the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Burma (IIMM) and call on the UN Security Council to refer Burma to the International Criminal Court (ICC), to prompt the end of mental and physical torture of political prisoners.

In Solidarity,

1. Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP)
2. Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR)
3. All Arakan Students' & Youths' Congress (AASYC)
4. Burma Civil War Museum (BCM)
5. Equality Myanmar (EQMM)
6. Association of Human Rights Defenders and Promoters (HRDP)
7. Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM)
8. Knowledge Hub Myanmar (KHM)
9. Karen Women's Organization (KWO)
10. Network for Human Rights Documentation Burma (ND-Burma)
11. Ta'ang Civil Society Organization (TCSO)
12. Union Of Karenni State Youth (UKSY)
13. Women's League of Burma (WLB)
14. Women for Justice (WJ)

**Contacts:**

+66 8 5597 3899

+66 6 5955 6630

+66 81 595 6138

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<sup>1</sup> <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2021/03/sac-m-says-myanmar-military-is-engaging-in-terrorism-and-calls-for-global-three-cuts-strategy/>