

Sophia Htwe is young activist and an Australian scholar currently pursuing a master's degree in International Community Development at Victoria University, in Melbourne, Australia. My research interest in peace, human rights and social justice in Myanmar. Currently I am researching the role of Myanmar human rights civil society organizations in supporting human rights and peacebuilding in the Rohingya conflict. While doing research on this, I have worked as an evaluation consultant for the community development projects which focus on Rakhine and Rohingya communities in Rakhine State. Before I came to Australia, I worked community development projects and the last project I worked is called the 'Diverance' project which promotes diversity and tolerance among education employees, civil society workers, university students, and religious leaders from diverse backgrounds across Myanmar.

- **Myanmar military coup:** Tension had been mounting for weeks. AUNG MYE SWE, the leader of NLD and the country's de facto ruler since 2016, won a thumping victory in last November's elections. Taking more than 60 per cent of the vote, she was set to consolidate to hold over Burmese politics, vowing to push for constitutional changes that would limit further the army's once limitless powers. Her opponents, the pro-army USDP, claimed massive electoral fraud. The elections were certainly not free and fair.

More than a million people, including Rohingya Muslim refugees in Bangladesh were denied the right to vote and polls were cancelled in several constituencies, most of them with large ethnic minority populations. But according to independent observers, despite these problems, there was little to suggest fraud on the scale alleged. On 1 February the army arrested AUNG MYE SWE and other NLD leaders and declared a state of emergency. They said they would rule for a year, hold fresh elections, and hand authority back to a civilian administration.

- **The regional reactions to the coup in Myanmar:** A culture of non-interference in ASEAN prevails and limits the practice of criticism of member states. The ASEAN member states are unlikely to support democracy movement in Myanmar as they oppress their own people. All ASEAN member states except Indonesia and Malaysia remarked the case of Myanmar is an internal affair at first. Soon after, Indonesia initiated a push to have ASEAN back an action plan that would seek to hold the military to its promise to organize a fair and inclusive new election. Right after the report emerged, a large group of protesters mobilized and held a demonstration outside the Indonesian Embassy in Yangon, but also at those of other ASEAN countries including Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore. This shows that ASEAN leaders are unlikely to take effective actions rather than supporting the plans of the new military regime, which has no interest whatsoever in adhering to democratic norms. The 54 million people of Myanmar deserve the full support of the world and their regional neighbours. But ASEAN fails to help and stand with people of Myanmar.
- **The implications for Australians in Myanmar:** Australia has announced that their development program is also being redirected to the immediate humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable. Australia's autonomous sanctions regime also includes an arms embargo that prohibits supplying weapons to Myanmar and targeted sanctions on a number of individuals as well as Australia Defence cooperation program with Myanmar military is suspended. However, the Australian government still needs to cut the business ties with Myanmar military-associated companies. Australia should recognize CRPH as a legitimate government body as well as pressure other alliance countries to do the same.

There is the widespread belief in Myanmar that international community can or will save Myanmar. Indeed, the international community including Australia is right to call for an arms embargo and sanctions on the military and its businesses. But it is also important to support the protests including CDMers. The courage of CDMers is truly admirable and needs the direct support of the world. The movement needs more than words of support. It requires funding, logistical and technological, and aid.

Change in Myanmar will come from within, it is the responsibility of the world to aid them in that process. The efforts by the international community must be done in consultation with the people of Myanmar.

- International Community or UN: Many protesters in Myanmar have implored the UN to act, with one popular slogan asking “how many dead bodies” the organization needed to take action. They have implored the US, EU and others to act through armed invasion. UN officials, along with countries including the US and UK, have vowed that the military will be held accountable for its crimes, but have also failed to outline how that might happen so far.

The people desperately request R2P intervention. The R2P intervention may happen for four reasons: the threat or acts of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing.

Evidently, all of these violations are present in Myanmar today. Killing and shooting peaceful protesters on the streets of Myanmar represents the definition of crimes against humanity. Decades of attacks on ethnic nationality communities compose ethnic cleansing. The case of Rohingya is an evident of genocide.

It seems that Western countries does not has any political will to take military intervention. The UN was created to address that kind of threat to peace and security, and ensuring accountability is a responsibility that the UN owes to people everywhere around the world that include the people of Myanmar.

The question is why UN even exist if it has no option left to help a situation like Myanmar whenever China and Russia use its veto power against meaningful action. What’s the point of having UNSC if it even cant issue a statement without agreement from China and Russia.