

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK

of Academies & Scholarly Societies



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SECRETARIAT

500 Fifth St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
United States of America
Email: hrnetwork@nas.edu
Internationalhrnetwork.org

FOUNDING MEMBERS

François Jacob* – *France*
Max Perutz* – *United Kingdom*
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(*Nobel Laureate)

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The International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (IHRN) is an alliance of more than 90 national academies and scholarly societies that defends the fundamental rights of fellow academics and health professionals worldwide and supports academic and medical institutions under threat. As members of the IHRN's Executive Committee, we are gravely concerned about widespread and ongoing human rights abuses by police and military forces in Myanmar. These abuses include mass detentions and the use of excessive, often lethal, force against individuals in the country, to include our professional colleagues. Security forces in Myanmar have also raided hospitals and universities as part of a broader crackdown on peaceful protests.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has condemned the Myanmar security forces' escalating use of excessive force against peaceful protesters since the February 1 military coup, under the leadership of General Min Aung Hlaing. The military chief has been internationally condemned for alleged genocide against the Rohingya ethnic minority in the north of Rakhine State.

Citing credible reports, OHCHR indicates that police and military forces have fired live ammunition into large crowds of people, and used weapons such as tear gas and stun grenades, resulting in dozens of deaths and injuries. UN Women has drawn attention to security forces' use of violence against women, who have been on the frontlines of peaceful protests. Since the coup began, more than 1,000 individuals have been arbitrarily arrested and detained for having exercised internationally guaranteed human rights. Our concern is heightened by reports that detainees have been denied access to needed medical care.

We understand that health workers have been specifically targeted with arrests, violence, and intimidation, and that security forces have interfered with their ethical duty to provide non-discriminatory medical care to individuals in need. An OHCHR statement issued on February 28 noted that "today alone, police have detained at least 85 medical professionals and students." In recent days, numerous media outlets and human rights bodies have reported attacks on ambulances and other medical support vehicles, as well as brutal police beatings of health professionals seeking to provide medical care to injured

Academies in the IHRN support and promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, assist unjustly incarcerated nonviolent professional colleagues, address grave science-related human rights issues, and advocate for member institutions whose independence is threatened.

protesters. On March 7, the military reportedly descended on multiple public hospitals, occupying them by force and intimidating patients and hospital staff.

Students, scholars, and academic institutions have also been targets of repression by police and military forces since the beginning of the coup. Military troops have occupied several universities, and security forces have repeatedly used force and intimidation against protesting students and scholars in and around university campuses. According to reliable reports, numerous students and scholars have been arrested and detained.

The actions by Myanmar's security forces constitute the serious abuse of rights and freedoms protected under international law, including the rights to life, health, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom from arbitrary detention. We call for an end to use of force against peaceful protesters in Myanmar, the release of all individuals held in arbitrary detention, unimpeded access to medical care, including for those in detention, and the withdrawal of security forces from hospitals and universities.

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