

Beat: News

EVIDENCE OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY IN MYANMAR ESCALATES

ReliefWeb Press Release

New York City, 11.08.2022, 19:18 Time

ARAC International Global Media Partners - Press Release | Source: UN HRC via ReliefWeb | Posted: 11 Aug 2022 | Originally published: 9 Aug 2022

Geneva, 9 August 2022 – Crimes against humanity continue to be systematically committed in Myanmar, with ongoing conflicts severely impacting women and children, according to the evidence gathered to date by the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (Mechanism) and outlined in its Annual Report released today.

The Mechanism has collected more than three million information items from almost 200 sources since starting operations three years ago, the Report notes. This includes interview statements, documentation, videos, photographs, geospatial imagery and social media material. The available information indicates that sexual and gender-based crimes, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, and crimes against children have been perpetrated by members of the security forces and armed groups. According to the Report, children in Myanmar have been tortured, conscripted and arbitrarily detained, including as proxies for their parents.

“Crimes against women and children are amongst the gravest international crimes, but they are also historically underreported and under-investigated,” said Nicholas Koumjian, Head of the Mechanism. “Our team has dedicated expertise to ensure targeted outreach and investigations so that these crimes can ultimately be prosecuted. Perpetrators of these crimes need to know that they cannot continue to act with impunity. We are collecting and preserving the evidence so that they will one day be held to account.”

According to the Report, “there are ample indications that since the military takeover in February 2021, crimes have been committed in Myanmar on a scale and in a manner that constitutes a widespread and systematic attack against a civilian population” and the nature of potential criminality is also expanding. This includes the execution of four individuals by Myanmar’s military on 25 July 2022, which was carried out after the Report was prepared.

The Report is released just two weeks ahead of the five-year commemoration of clearance operations which resulted in the displacement of nearly one million Rohingya people. Most of the Rohingya who were deported or forcibly displaced at that time are still in camps for refugees or internally displaced persons.

“While the Rohingya consistently express their desire for a safe and dignified return to Myanmar, this will be very difficult to achieve unless there is accountability for the atrocities committed against them, including through prosecutions of the individuals most responsible for those crimes,” said Koumjian. “The continued plight of the Rohingya and the continuing violence in Myanmar illustrate the important role of the Mechanism to facilitate justice and accountability and help deter further atrocities.”

With the consent of its sources of information, the Mechanism is sharing relevant evidence to support international justice proceedings currently underway at the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court.

The Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM or Mechanism) was created by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2018 to collect and analyse evidence of the most serious international crimes and other violations of international law committed in Myanmar since 2011. It aims to facilitate justice and accountability by preserving and organizing this evidence and preparing case files for use in future prosecutions of those responsible in national, regional and international courts.

For more information visit <https://iimm.un.org/> or contact iimm@un.org

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Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-21431/evidence-of-crimes-against-humanity-in-myanmar-escalates.html>

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