



ACSC / APF 2021

## ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC)/ ASEAN Peoples' Forum (APF) 2021 October 15-17, 2021

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#### Day 2 Press Release 17.10.2021

The ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC) / ASEAN Peoples' Forum (APF) 2021 second day has been successfully commenced under the conference's theme ***'Authoritarianism, Militarism, and Covid-19: Challenges for Collective Actions to Address Rising Inequality and Shrinking Civic Space in South East Asia.'*** The second day was intended to promote solidarity with the peoples of Myanmar and to discuss the challenges and seek solutions from the ground against the shrinking civic space in South East Asia.

After the recap of day one, day two started with a plenary session, titled ***"Culture of Impunity – A Threat to the Collective Humanity: Justice Must be Served for Peoples of Myanmar"***. Panel speakers are varied from diverse backgrounds including the His Excellency U Aung Myo Min of National Unity Government (NUG), former foreign minister of Thailand Kasit Piromya - the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR), Nga Ngai Nneng -Kuki Woman from Women League of Burma (WLB), and Ye Wai Phyo Aung of General Strike Committee. The panel has highlighted the root of February's attempted coup is the military's total impunity. And the panel rang the alarm on the passivity, and in some cases total inaction by the international community, in particular ASEAN, to pursue justice and accountability has further emboldened the military in their continued commission of atrocity crimes today in Myanmar.

Kasit Piromya called for the transformation of ASEAN into a democratic space where freedom of expression and human rights as core values. He said, ***"We cannot wait for ASEAN politicians to lead this charge, has to be the people"***.

Aung Myo Min said within Myanmar's Spring Revolution, it is a national issue to address impunity. Since the Military has responded to the revolution with brutality and terrorism, it is regarded that International crimes are taking place against people of the country. The culture of human rights is not respected by military while the culture of impunity is well established. So far, thousands of ethnic peoples including Rohingya have had to flee their communities – now became IDPs and Refugees. It is clear that previous atrocities laid the groundwork for current atrocities. Crimes against the few are now crimes against the many. We will bring justice and make the military accountable for all the crimes committed over six decades in the country by fully cooperate with international accountability mechanisms.

Ye Wai Phyo Aung said the Military is the oppressor of the people – historic overview while Constitution has been used to keep it in power. So far, people have not been able to enjoy any kind of democracy due to the military and political system created. Our goal is a federal democratic union. He also stressed that ***"democracy, transitional justice and human rights must be at the core of the new Myanmar"***.

Nga Ngai Nneng said 60 percent of all protesters are women. Those Woman detainee are being subjected to torture, sexual assault, verbal abuse and intimidation. It is the Long history of violence of Myanmar military – violence against women – including sexual violence. War crimes and crimes against humanity are being committed while rape is used as an instrument of war to demoralize and destroy communities. She also urges the ASEAN to ensure that the release of all political detainees and protesters, end the use of sexual violence by junta against female detainees, to end military violence and terror campaign against the people to prevent further atrocity crimes. She also ***call on international community to investigation crimes and take a role on total arms embargo with monitoring mechanism, and to refer situation of Myanmar to 'International Criminal Court (ICC) – focus on ethnic peoples.***

The day continued with two convergence spaces with the thematic 1) Environmental Justice, Land Rights and Climate Change and 2) COVID-19 impact social, political, cultural, and economic issues. One workshop conducted under convergence space 3 was discussing a food system based on environmental and social justice through recognition, securing land rights, and ecological sustainability in Timor Leste, Myanmar and Laos. The speakers' discussed many obstacles and a substantial number of policies for the agriculture development, food security and social reality is concerning in the country and the region, especially, like the country of Timor Leste and Laos who are depending on agricultural production. The workshop also emphasized the Indigenous Peoples are agents of change in the face of climate change.

***“Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and their communities are nurturing a close relationship with their natural environment, which is intimately tied to their livelihoods. As IPs depend on biodiversity for their well-being, they are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change, says the speakers from Myanmar (Unnamed).”***

Therefore, the discussion synthesizes with a few important points. In the longer run, ASEAN and its member countries must strive to put in place resilient farming systems. They should develop sustainable food systems that place small farmers at their very heart and are inspired, inter alia, by agro-ecology. Further food security systems and mechanisms must also be set up. A certain emphasis should be put on the diversification of food sources thereupon. Also, mechanisms should be put in place to monitor and evaluate the commitments of ASEAN as well as its member countries in tackling climate change.

There are 3 workshops under the convergence space 4 on the 1) social, political, cultural, and economic of COVID-19, 2) Striving for establishing a welfare state in ASEAN countries. One of the good practices advocacy and campaign were stressed by the Universal Basic Income Movement in Indonesia was the relevance of the momentum, rights-based income model for the marginalized groups, the transition where the basic income can be floor and basic safety net for the citizen and the synergy in its implementation and it can improve welfare policy efficiency, 3) Challenges to solidarity with migrant workers in Southeast Asia. The participants reflected on the importance of investing in the rights and welfare of children, girls, youth, and women as an important of a welfare state and social reforms. The workshop opportunities in solidarity building with migrants' rights activists and migrant leaders who have been advocating in the ASEAN region. This workshop became a platform for various inputs from the region on human, and migrants' rights affected by the pandemic. The workshop urged ASEAN member states to ratify the ILO Convention 189 on Domestic Workers and ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment Convention. This includes the ratification of CEDAW and CRC.

More than 160 participants from across 11 countries in Southeast Asia together with other 15 countries from various regions attended the plenary and the plenary has reached more than 50,000 people across ASEAN through our media partners Myanmar Now<sup>34</sup> Khit Thit Media and other local media channels.

The session will continue again until 17 October and to discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on human rights and the economic projections in ASEAN rebuilding post-COVID-19 and moving forward for the recovery better, in solidarity with hope.

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