

The Statement of Members of the Global Peacebuilding Association of Japan on the Current Situation in Myanmar

February 24, 2021

1. The Global Peacebuilding Association of Japan is concerned about the political turmoil in Myanmar caused by the Myanmar armed forces which overthrew on February 1 the Government formed by the National League for Democracy (NLD) which won overwhelmingly the general elections. Those detained by the military regime, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, should be released immediately. In order to prevent any major armed clashes and casualties, the Government of Japan should reach out to the stakeholders in Myanmar, members of ASEAN and the United Nations Security Council to establish a UN special political mission.

2. It is of utmost importance to respect the freely expressed will of the people of Myanmar and at the same time to protect their lives. In order to preserve the democratic principle of governance that reflects people's will and their lives, the UN should exercise its role as an impartial mediator and encourage communication among all stakeholders in Myanmar to resolve the current situation in a peaceful manner.

3. In order to promote dialogue among the parties at this critical juncture, it is neither effective nor sufficient just to invoke economic sanctions. Such sanctions may slow down the reconciliation among the parties in conflict and jeopardize the prospect for empowerment of the people. If Myanmar's military leaders were pushed to the edge economically and financially, they may seek support of authoritarian States. This would reduce the prospect for return to democratic governance.

4. The dire situation in Myanmar requires rapid response from the international community in a constructive manner. The Government of Japan is urged to take proactive steps. Japan can make use of its strong local network with all stakeholders in Myanmar and play a facilitator's role to create space for dialogue among them. Japan can also build on its strong political and economic ties with countries of Asia, in particular ASEAN members in order to protect human rights of the people of Myanmar and to help restore their democratic governance in the country. In this regard, the Global Peacebuilding Association of Japan makes following proposals to the Government of Japan.

5. Japan should propose to the UN Security Council to revise the current UN Special Envoy mandate and strengthen the UN presence in Myanmar by establishing a UN special political mission. Japan is in a unique position to do so, as it practices democratic governance while

maintaining a level of friendly relationship with Asian countries particularly ASEAN countries. Japan has also maintained a friendly relationship with many stakeholders in Myanmar for many years, including the NLD and the military. It is time to take advantage of this position and call upon all UN member States, including the permanent members of the Security Council to strengthen the UN presence in Myanmar.

6. It is recommended that the Security Council establish a UN special political mission with the following mandates:

- (1) to pursue the Primacy of Politics approach advocated by the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations in 2015 and focus on the political solution to the current conflict in Myanmar;
- (2) to aim at enabling Myanmar's armed forces, the NLD and any other stakeholders in Myanmar to resolve their differences in a peaceful manner and restore democratic governance, the rule of law and human rights;
- (3) to promote free and inclusive dialogue between Myanmar's political actors and all stakeholders;
- (4) to encourage all stakeholders in Myanmar to respect the results of elections held in November 2020 and convene the Parliament at the earliest opportunity;
- (5) to monitor and report any developments in Myanmar to ASEAN and the UN Security Council and to explore any possibility that will bring about peace and stability in Myanmar; and,
- (6) The UN should maintain its presence in Myanmar until peace and stability are fully restored in the country.

(Note) The UN Special Political Mission is managed by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and usually does not include military and police. In this respect, it differs from peacekeeping operations (PKO) under the direction of the Department of Peace Operations.

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