

## **Analyzing AICHR's Responses and Roles in Resolving Myanmar's Humanitarian Crisis**

Recently, we have been shocked by the news of the military coup conflict in Myanmar. The conflict erupted on Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 when Min Aung Hlaing, Myanmar Military Commander, launched his succession to Aung San Suu Kyi and several other stakeholders (Head, 2021). This power struggle was based on the military junta's accusations of fraud in November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 election, which made the NLD the winner (Drury, 2021). Outside of the political dimension, social life, such as democracy and freedom of expression of the community also experienced shocks. Many people condemned the coup and finally chose to take to the streets to express their disappointment. However, public protests were met with repression by the military junta. In fact, as of June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021, there have been 6421 arrests, 5224 detention cases, and 883 murder cases (Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, 2021). It did not stop there, various human rights violations such as ill-treatment, torture, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, and sexual harassment of female detainees also occurred.

Then, in terms of public health and economy, of course, also been affected. As we know, the world is currently being hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. Myanmar is no exception. Based on data, as of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Covid-19 in Myanmar has reached 155,697 cases with a total death of 3,320 people (Worldometer, 2021). This situation is exacerbated by the conflict in Myanmar where many health programs have been suspended. In addition, the community also began to find it difficult to get supplies of food and medicine due to the limited supplies, the number of strikes by workers, and also the large amount of looting that occurred. In this case, the risk of malnutrition is higher. Health services were also disrupted due to the large number of medical personnel involved in the protests and being repressed by the junta. If public health is disturbed, it will certainly have an impact on the economic sector where it becomes paralyzed because people are scare and unable to work. The same thing also happened in the field of education where students and college students could no longer go to study due to the closure of schools and colleges.

Responding to this multidimensional humanitarian crisis, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) as the human rights commission

of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) held a meeting via video conference on 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> February 2021. Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand as the representatives expressed concern over what is happening in Myanmar and urged Myanmar to adhere to the principles of the ASEAN Charter and the ASEAN Declaration of Human Rights. In addition, AICHR also calls for all parties to resolve disputes through a peaceful dialogue mechanism (Human Rights in ASEAN, 2021). Furthermore, AICHR also held a virtual meeting on April 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> 2021. In that meeting, the case of human rights violations in Myanmar are still being discussed. During the meeting, AICHR stated its readiness to assist in conflict resolution through the tasks of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, 2021).

However, this statement seems to be only rhetoric if it is not accompanied by real action. The AICHR should take a more sophisticated role in solving this humanitarian problem. Therefore, there are several things that AICHR can do. First, being part of the Humanitarian Assistance Team to provide policies for implementing humanitarian actions based on human rights principles. Second, being part of the ASEAN Special Envoy 'team' or 'advisory board' to physically provide input on human rights-based approaches. Third, holding regional consultations to get information from people in the region, especially Myanmar on how to resolve conflicts which they think are the best and most effective. Fourth, increasing public awareness through the media, lectures, forums, and social media. Fifth, monitoring the situation as well as documenting the human rights violations in Myanmar. Sixth, coordinating with other human rights institutions to help resolve problems. By carrying out these recommendations, it is hoped that AICHR can play a greater role in resolving cases of human rights violations in Myanmar so that people can regain their rights to live freely and peacefully.

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