



## [Myanmar Security Forces Kill Over 80 Anti-Coup Protesters This Past Weekend as the Military Junta Continues Its Ruthless Crackdown](#)

The military junta in Myanmar continues its ruthless crackdown against anti-coup and pro-democracy protesters, as security forces killed more than 80 people this past weekend in one of the latest disturbing developments there. According to a domestic monitoring group and news outlet, the lethal use of violence took place after troops fired on demonstrators with rifle grenades, resulting in dozens of fatalities. Former lawmakers who were ousted as a result of the February 1st military coup have urged the global community to increase its pressure on the junta, while analysts warn that the country stands on the verge of state failure and risks becoming ungovernable if the current situation persists. Meanwhile, rights groups estimate that over 700 civilians have been killed by security forces since Myanmar's military seized power around two and a half months ago. This alarming figure consists of not only citizens who have merely participated in peaceful anti-coup protests, but also children and other family members who have died as a result of violent night raids carried out by the military.

The brutal levels of excessive force and suppression used by the military junta in response to the anti-coup protests has escalated fears of a prolonged and widescale crisis in Myanmar. United Nations officials have cautioned that the country is on the path towards a "full-blown" conflict similar to the one which has emerged in Syria over the past decade. Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, expressed that there is a worrying parallel between what is currently happening in Myanmar and what took place in Syria back in 2011, saying that "There too, we saw peaceful protests met with unnecessary and clearly disproportionate force...and the state's brutal and persistent repression of its own people led to some individuals taking up arms, followed by a downward and rapidly expanding spiral of violence all across the country." In recent days, the concern regarding the situation in Myanmar has also been exacerbated by the outbreak of clashes between the military junta and ethnic armed groups, which risks devolving the conflict even further.

Ethnic groups in Myanmar have a history of battling government forces, and the recent developments have seen several of these groups issue a call-to-arms to fight against the military junta. These groups have garnered support from politicians who were forced into hiding when the coup occurred. One such politician, Dr Sasa, said that a civil war was inevitable if the international community failed to step in and protect civilians from the junta. In recent days, clashes between ethnic groups and the junta have intensified, with the army flying combat missions and dropping bombs on areas near the border with Thailand. It is the first time in over twenty years that the military has engaged with armed groups in the border region, which indicates the severity of the current conflict and the danger of it escalating if the junta continues its inhumane response to anti-coup forces throughout Myanmar.