

'MYANMAR COULD BE HEADING TOWARDS FULL-BLOWN CONFLICT'

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Michelle Bachelet

The UN rights chief warned on Tuesday Myanmar could be spiralling towards a “full-blown” Syrian-style conflict, after a two-month crackdown that a local monitoring group says has already claimed more than 700 lives.

Myanmar is in chaos and its economy has been paralysed since the military seized power from civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi on February 1.

Warning of possible crimes against humanity, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet on Tuesday urged countries to take immediate action to push Myanmar’s military to stop its “campaign of repression and slaughter of its people.”

Daily rallies across Myanmar have been met with live rounds.

At least 710 civilians have been killed as of late Monday, including 50 children, according to a local monitoring group.

“I fear the situation in Myanmar is heading towards a full-blown conflict,” Bachelet said in a statement.

“There are clear echoes of Syria in 2011,” she warned, referring to the start of a civil war that over the past decade has killed nearly 4,00,000 people and forced more than six million to flee the country.

In recent weeks, several of Myanmar’s ethnic rebel groups in some lawless border territories have stepped up attacks on the military and police, raising fears of a broader civil conflict.

The military has retaliated with air strikes, which the Free Burma Rangers -- a Christian aid group working in the area -- said had displaced more than 24,000 civilians in Karen state by Saturday.

The Rangers, which runs a health clinic in the state, said air strikes had killed at least 20 people and wounded more than 40.

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