

18 March 2021**HRK Senate expresses concern about violence against university members in Myanmar**

During an online meeting on Tuesday, the Senate of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) expressed its shock at the escalating violence in Myanmar and the serious implications for the country's universities and their members. Since the military seized power at the start of February, it has been coming down increasingly hard on protesters, many of whom are university members. There have been raids on several university campuses, with students and staff participating in peaceful protests having been verbally or physically intimidated or even detained.

"We are seeing serious breaches of people's rights to freedom of expression and assembly as well as their academic freedom. We are extremely concerned about the situation," says HRK President Prof Dr Peter-André Alt. The Senate of the HRK declared its support to the students and staff at Myanmar universities and is calling for everyone involved to put an end to the violence and return to democratic methods and principles.

Working to create strong and academically independent universities is one key to the country's continued development. In recent years, steps have been taken to reform the university sector, but this progress is now at risk of being all but wiped out. "It is crucial that we maintain our existing relationships with contacts in the country wherever possible. German universities share a keen interest in continuing to support their partners in Myanmar going forward and furthering their ongoing efforts to increase capacity," says HRK Vice-President Prof Dr Bernd Scholz-Reiter.