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United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday (Oct 25) appointed Singaporean Noeleen Heyzer as his new special envoy on Myanmar, the UN said in a statement.

Dr Heyzer, a former senior UN diplomat, will replace Ms Christine Schraner Burgener, who finishes up this weekend after more than three years in the role.

Dr Heyzer, 73, has held multiple senior positions at the UN, in particular between 2007 and 2014 as the head of an economic and social commission for Asia and the Pacific. Between 2013 and 2015, she served as special advisor for East Timor.

As part of her duties on the Economic and Social Commission, Dr Heyzer worked closely with Asean, as well as with the Myanmar authorities on the development and reduction of poverty.

The outgoing UN special envoy on Myanmar said on Monday that recognising Myanmar's junta as the country's government would not stop growing violence, warning such a move would push the country towards instability and becoming a failed state.

"I hope that the international community will not give up," Ms Schraner Burgener told Reuters. "We should stand with the people."

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Protests and unrest have paralysed Myanmar since a Feb 1 coup, with the military accused of atrocities and excessive force against civilians, though the junta blames the unrest on “terrorists” allied with a shadow government.

Ms Schraner Burgener last week said that Myanmar had spiralled into civil war, the chance to return to democracy was disappearing and the military had “no interest” in compromise or dialogue. The junta pushed back on Monday and said her comments were far from reality and reflected a UN bias.

“The violence will not stop if somebody would accept the SAC as a legal government – violence will not stop,” Ms Schraner Burgener, referring to the State Administrative Council (SAC), as Myanmar’s junta is known, said on Monday.

The diplomat from Switzerland said a “real, honest dialogue” was needed among all parties, but for that to happen Myanmar military leader Min Aung Hlaing would first need to be replaced by “somebody who is more constructive”.

South-east Asian leaders are set to meet this week, but without General Min Aung Hlaing – a rare exclusion by the Asean bloc, usually known for non-interference.

“No one in the region has an interest to recognise the SAC because that would mean going towards a failed state, instability, not only in Myanmar, but also in the region,” said Ms Schraner Burgener.

The UN is also faced with rival claims on who will sit in Myanmar’s seat at the world body.

A decision by member states – described as “crucial” by Ms Schraner Burgener – is due to be made by the end of the year on whether the junta or current Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun, appointed by Ms Aung San Suu Kyi’s ousted elected government, should represent the country in New York.