

UNITED FOR A JUST FUTURE

IndustriALL Global Union 3rd Congress
14-15 September 2021

Resolution in support of democracy in Myanmar

The Industrial Workers Federation of Myanmar (IWFM), affiliated to the Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar (CTUM) would like to submit this resolution to the IndustriALL Congress taking place on 14-16 September 2021 for its approval.

On the 1st of February 2021, a coup d'état by the military in Myanmar led to the detention of democratically elected leaders of National League for Democracy (NLD) Win Myint and Aung San Suu Kyi and of many other political leaders, hours before the swearing-in ceremony of new parliament and the formation of a new cabinet. The military junta has since carried out arrests, killings and other forms of violence against politicians, activists and workers in Myanmar.

Hundreds of thousands of citizens and workers participated in peaceful demonstrations across the country, and trade unions have been central to the organization of the Civil Disobedience Movement against the coup and the brutal violation of human rights, extrajudicial killings, arrests, rapes, villages, hospitals, churches disruption and burning. At least 1088 people have been killed by the military, over 8100 people have been arrested and 1984 arrest warrants have been issued.

Hundreds of thousands of workers already lost their jobs (at least 250,000 garment workers, 500,000 construction workers, 125,000 teachers and 65,000 from tourism sector alone). Trade unionists and workers taking part in the demonstrations are being hounded by the military. Many trade union leaders had to go into hiding, several have been arrested and many have had their passports declared void. People are dragged out of their homes at night and arrested. In military or police custody, people are brutally tortured – often leading to death. Many workplaces and industrial zones such as Hlaing Thar Yar and Shwepyitha have been violently attacked by the military. The UN estimates that 230,000 people have been displaced since February 1st.

The resurgence of the Covid19 pandemic is used by the military for further repressive actions against doctors, nurses and health personnel who have sided with the democratic opposition. Hospitals have been ransacked, volunteers have been arrested. The military blocks the arrival of medicines from abroad and confiscates the oxygen cylinders. Many hospitals have been closed or placed under military control. In prisons, political prisoners are exposed to Covid19.

In many garment factories workers, mostly women are working without any preventive equipment and Covid affected workers continue to work side by side with the others.

With 60% of health facilities inoperative, it is not possible to administer COVID and other life-saving vaccinations. Public health experts in Myanmar predict that 50% of the country's population could be infected with the Alpha or Delta variants of COVID-19 if immediate precautions are not taken.

The UN Secretary General, Guterres condemned "the continuing brutal violence of the military in Myanmar" and reiterated that "it continues to support the people of Myanmar and their aspirations to achieve a peaceful, stable and prosperous Myanmar and also called for" a firm and unambiguous international response "and" that the violations of fundamental human rights be put to an end to resume the path of democracy ".

Recent data published by international organizations are extremely worrying:

- The World Bank, in the July 2021 Myanmar Economic Monitor, underlines how the combination of the coup and the Covid19 pandemic will cause a 30% fall of Myanmar GDP in 2021.
- The UNDP declared that in the short term 25 million people, almost half of the 54 million inhabitants, will be in absolute poverty.
- The ILO calculated that "in the first half of 2021 about 14% of working hours were lost, which is equivalent to the working hours of at least 2.2 million full-time workers. The approximately 6% contraction of the economy in the second quarter of 2021 will result in a loss of 1.2 million jobs. Women were more affected by job losses than men. The hardest hit critical sectors are construction, clothing, tourism and hospitality which declined by approximately 35 per cent, 31 per cent and 25 per cent respectively, with even higher relative losses of working hours.

As the military's use of violence towards the peaceful protestors is escalating, Myanmar Trade Unions are reiterating the urgent need for a strong coordinated international action to tackle the political and the economic, social and health deep emergencies that are putting at risk the whole country future.

The Myanmar trade unions are working in strict coordination with the recently nominated National Unity Government (NUG), that includes representatives from different parties and ethnic nationalities. The NUG is working in support of the Myanmar people, against the military repression and the destruction of the whole country, regardless of its ethnic religious differences, including the Rohingya, for whom the NUG committed to respect their citizenship rights a basic condition for their voluntary, dignified and safe return.

Myanmar trade unions are in full support of the NUG fighting at the UN General Assembly for the recognition of its UN credentials and for the full support of all the UN governments to it.

From the 1st of February the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar has been working for the adoption of comprehensive economic sanctions to cut off the military's revenues in order to strangle their power and to oblige them to step back. Some countries, including the European Union with its 27 member States, the US, Canada and others have introduced sanctions on key military controlled holdings and targeting companies in the gems, timber, and mining sectors. Financial bans and travel restrictions were issued against key junta leaders. The military junta depends heavily on oil and gas-sector revenues. A coordinated international call to boycott and impose sanctions on the junta is needed to cut off its key sources of income.

Therefore, IndustriALL Global Union and its affiliates worldwide will:

- Support the campaign for comprehensive economic sanctions against the military junta in Myanmar by calling on:
 - o governments to put pressure on multinational companies and global brands to cease their operations, divest, stop placing new orders and halt their business relations in Myanmar;
 - o multinational companies and global brands originating in our countries, demanding that they cease operations, divest, stop placing new orders and halt their business relations in Myanmar, with the condition that they ensure workers' rights and entitlements when doing so, particularly ensuring suppliers pay compensation to workers when factories are shut down, in close dialogue with trade unions;
- Exert pressure on their national governments to demand comprehensive political and economic sanctions against the military junta, (especially in the oil and gas, insurance and financial sectors) as well as sanctions against the military conglomerates, MEC and MEHL; the state-owned gas and oil entity, MOGE; and targeted sanctions against military leaders.
- Exert pressure on their national governments to demand for:
 - NUG credential recognition at the UN General Assembly.
 - the Myanmar military junta immediately and unconditionally release all the political leaders, workers, trade unionists and human rights defenders, imprisoned in Myanmar simply for exercising their human rights and labour rights.
 - To demand the withdrawal of all arrest warrants against trade unionists and labour activists for their solely peaceful activities, and to demand an end to the attacks on freedom of freedom of association and freedom of expression in Myanmar.
 - To support the international campaign for a comprehensive global arm embargo
 - To provide IndustriALL any information regarding links to the Myanmar military-related business dealings for follow up.
 - To demand to governments to provide humanitarian aids through the NUG and the trade unions in Myanmar.

IndustriALL will continue to coordinate its activities with the ITUC and the Council of Global Unions to effectively end the military junta' s reign of terror and restore Myanmar on the path to a democracy where working people and their representatives can return to the free exercise of their fundamental rights.

