



# Industrial Workers' Federation of Myanmar

*Responsibilities and Rights*

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## **IWFM reports on current situation of Myanmar to IndustriALL Asia Pacific Executive Committee meeting and IndustriALL Global Executive Committee meeting 21-22 April 2021**

**Dear Brothers and Sisters. I thank you for the opportunity to provide you with this update on the situation facing in Myanmar today.**

As trade Unions and workers representatives, since the 29th of January 2021, we had objected to the obstruction to the Democratization of our country.

On the 1st of February 2021, the military staged a coup under the leadership of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. They immediately arrested and imprisoned crucial civilian leaders, among them President U Win Myint, state counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, government officials, parliament members, trade unionists, journalists and human rights activists.

On the 2nd of Feb, the military invited the Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar CTUM to the tripartite meeting. CTUM announced through a statement (2nd February 2021) that we would not be participating in any tripartite social dialogue mechanisms when they involved representatives of the illegitimate military junta. Our members from the energy, mining, transport (train, airplane) garment, and manufacturing, construction, education, and agriculture sectors are also joining demonstrations and participating in the CDM.

Accordingly, we successfully stopped train services nationwide, interrupted mining operations, stopped work in countless factories (many of them military-associated), and quit work in many areas of the energy, drilling, refinery, and garment sectors. Our members also encourage non-members to join.

Consequently, many of our members have lost jobs, lost the government provided accommodations – forfeited their salary and now have arrest warrants issued against them – but still refuse to go back to work.

The one very positive improvement we see now – is that we now have the elected representatives, the Generation Z (the young people), the Communities, the Workers and the Ethnic organizations all working together – and on the same objectives of

- 1) Removing the Military regime and
- 2) Establishing a Federal Union where everyone has equal rights and voice.

After the coup, a Committee was formed to Representing the Pyithu Hluttaw - the Lower House of the Myanmar Parliament - CRPH. The political representatives of the CRPH have already announced that the military drawn National Constitution of 2008 is no longer recognized.

Unlike the struggle of 1988 or the coup on the election of 1990 – within a very short period (between Feb and April of 2021) all of us within Myanmar's boundaries as well as the communities outside, its boundaries are all united. And now, the National Unity Government (NUG) has been formed through a common agreeable but simple charter. And, this government, just like the CRPH now, will be based within Myanmar's boundaries. It is composed of elected parliamentarians of Nov 2020, the representatives of the ethnic nationalities, various academics and experts.

It is also important to note that within these few months we have had many UN resolutions / the EU and EP resolutions / the ILO resolutions – and the Resolution of the Chambers of Deputies on March 2. In all these resolutions – the whole world, except for China and Russia has objected to the coup and asked the regime to hand over power to the elected representatives.

And the Myanmar military keeps on killing its people. With the National Unity Government, we all are forming a base that will be removing the military once and for all, and start the process for unity through the Federal Union.

We need the international movement and Int'l organization to recognize this National Unity Government, provide the needed support as a Government so that we can work more efficiently on the political changes, help with humanitarian needs, start work on the eco-social developments.

The lives of people in Myanmar are not safe anymore because of the shooting in the daytime and raids every night by the police and soldiers. The military is hunting people in the night on the streets and going house to house and arresting active Political party members, students, trade unionist and people who those joining CDM. People were arrested at night and families received their family members' dead bodies in the morning. The dead bodies approved that they were brutally tortured and killed. Many came back home with serious injuries. Some disappear without hearing where they are, alive or dead.

Trade union leaders from the garment sector are mostly women who were in the front line. Many of them need to hide. There was a serious attack in the biggest industrial zone, Hlaing Thar Yar, on 14 Mar. and set under military rule. More than one hundred people in Hlaing Thar yar were killed in the following days. The military has burned some people alive and applied the most brutal torture methods. Thousands of workers have left the industrial zone because of the shooting, arrest, persecution. Since February, the military has killed more than 700 civilians, including 40 children.[\[1\]](#) More than 3,200 innocent people have been arrested, charged or sentenced by the junta – only for demanding their democratic rights.

There is no future, no rights, no freedom, and no prosperity under military rule for anyone.

Myanmar people need your support to restore democracy in the country. We need to isolate the military junta within the country and internationally.

IWFM request to our brothers and sisters from industriALL to work on are as follows:

- 1) International governments not to recognize the representatives of the military junta including ASEAN, regional, at the UN and in all other international bodies

- 2) To get recognition of the CRPH and NUG as legitimate representative of the people of Burma/Myanmar
- 3) International governments to commit to a general international arms embargo against Myanmar.
- 4) To withdraw the credentials of military attachés, present in the Myanmar Embassies from respective countries.
- 5) International governments to adopt with urgency of comprehensive economic sanctions – especially of the OIL and GAS and the Insurance industry and including the denial of the use of US and Euro to cut down the military regimes incomes aimed at all financial and economic interests of the members of the SAC State Administrative Council, starting from the UMEC and MEC conglomerates, in order to strangle their economic power;
- 6) International companies to suspend any relationship with companies linked to the military regime.
- 7) All Trade Union pension funds should stop investing in insurance companies affiliated with the military in Myanmar.
- 8) To global brands from Europe and other countries, in particular our partnering brands in the ACT process, and employers in Myanmar, we are asking not to terminate workers in the current situation. If it is needed to terminate, they need to make sure that workers receive compensation. For this we are asking:
  - Brands should encourage their suppliers to give workers unpaid leave for an agreed period of time.
  - ACT Brands should support the development of a binding agreement between IWFM and all ACT brand suppliers to help protect workers from termination without severance if they do not come to work because of security concerns.
  - Brands should inform all suppliers that they will not be unfairly penalized if they deliver late the ordered goods due to the situation.
  - Brands should request suppliers to send the list of all workers who have been terminated or not been paid in full to EU Myan Ku Fund. If a dispute is filed under the ACT DRM, Brands should require the Employer to provide the list of all terminated workers.

9) Lastly, many workers have already lost their jobs, trade unionists have to hide from the police, and families are without income. Our courageous people continue to defy the brutal terrorist military. Workers and the people of Myanmar need humanitarian help immediately. Brands should contribute humanitarian funding to support the factories and workers in cooperation with IndustriALL and IWFM.

Brothers and Sisters, we appeal to your continuous support in this critical time.

The Military dictatorship must end.

We must win.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Khaing Zar Aung', written in a cursive style.

Khaing Zar Aung

President