



Federation of Trade Unions – Burma

Responsibilities & Rights

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Sanctions -- Now !

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The Federation of Trade Unions – Burma (FTUB) wishes to express its gratitude to all trade union organisations around the world who have displayed tremendous support for the just cause of Burma's workers and general population in the terrible events which have hit our country over the last few weeks. The response which national trade union centers and the Global Union Federations, as well as many of their regional and local branches and chapters have given to the ITUC's repeated calls for International Days of Actions on Burma has overwhelmed our members and sympathizers in Burma and abroad. It constitutes a precious encouragement in our struggle. Your moral, political, humanitarian and material support, your determination to keep the candle of freedom and democracy alight for us while the generals are attempting to throw the cover of darkness over their misdeeds, provide a source of inspiration for all of Burma's working men and women, monks, students, democracy activists and ordinary people.

We have observed how, throughout dozens of countries on all continents, workers have joined in pickets, demonstrations, vigils, protest marches, letter-writing campaigns and countless other acts of solidarity. We have been thrilled by the ITUC and ETUC's calls for a meaningful strengthening of European Union sanctions and for the adoption of a ban on investments and an obligation for EU-based companies to disinvest from Burma and cease their business links with our country: these links benefit only the junta, never the people! These calls by international and European unionists for a strengthening of economic pressure on the generals are fully in line with what we at the FTUB have been advocating for over 15 years! We urge all unionists in democratic countries around the world to support these demands and call on their governments and parliamentarians to put real pressure on the SPDC and to demand from entrepreneurs – including, where necessary, their own employers – to withdraw from co-operation with the junta. We salute and thank the unions, like France's CGT coordination body within the TOTAL Group, who have called on their own employer to quit Burma, or those who are prepared to call on their own pension funds to withdraw from multinationals doing business with our country. Please understand: trading with Burma benefits only the military!

To all of you, we say: "Do not believe those who claim that sanctions against the junta will hurt the people! Remember South Africa!". If sanctions do not hurt the generals, then why on earth are they demanding, as a precondition for talking with her, that our national, democratically-elected leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, drop her call for economic sanctions against the regime? Daw Suu's party, the NLD has just rejected these SPDC's demands, which have not changed for years. FTUB fully supports the NLD's line and asks you to support it as well. We know that this will be used against us by the regime, which will once more portray us as terrorists, intent on destroying the nation. They are lying: the only weapons used in the democracy movement are the guns turned by the army against the people, guns bought with the huge benefits deriving from international investments and trade.

To the unionists of the world, we say: "We are fighting for our parents, for our children, for their children and for our own survival. They will not scare us into submission or surrender! Our cause is just and it is simple: Burma's people are not less able or deserving of living in democracy than any other people in the world. With your help, we will win! And, as was said many years ago by Daw Suu: Please use your own freedom to defend ours!" ... Media - 66 08 7979 0794