

341st Session of the ILO Governing Body

Statement of the ILO Workers' Group on Myanmar

Calling for a return to democracy, and respect for the fundamental rights of Freedom of Association and Peaceful Assembly

27 March 2021

Chair,

I take the floor at this moment to place on record, on behalf of the Workers' Group in the ILO, our strongest condemnation of the coup d'état mounted by the Myanmar Military on 1 February 2021 following the national elections held in Myanmar in November 2020.

The situation in Myanmar is getting worse by the day. The Military is escalating its repression. People are being killed in their homes, workplaces and on the streets.

Already more than 300 people including children are killed and some 2,000 arrested, and numbers are increasing. I am just receiving reports that today, on Armed Forces Day, at least a hundred people more were killed, in what already now is the deadliest day since 1 February.

Industrial zones have become danger zones. Workers are increasingly at risk of death for exercising their right to freedom of association and peaceful protest.

Maung Maung, the President of the CTUM and a former member of the Governing Body, and 25 leaders from his union, are on a military wanted list. Other trade union leaders are under surveillance and many remain in hiding.

Workers must be free to exercise their right to freedom of association and peaceful protest without the threat of death or risk of forced labour.

We welcome the steps taken by countries who have frozen support for the Military and its businesses. We commend all businesses who have suspended their business association with the military and call on others to do so as well.

The Military must stop killing and repressing the people of Myanmar, and must immediately release all those workers and citizens who have been arrested and imprisoned for participating in the Civil Disobedience Movement.

The Workers' Group fully supports the call by the labor movement in Myanmar for a return to constitutional democracy and respect for the results of the elections of November 2020.

We welcome the position adopted yesterday by the Governing Body, to call among others on the military authorities to respect the will of the people, respect democratic norms and restore the democratically elected Government.

We stand in solidarity with the trade union colleagues, workers and people of Myanmar in these very dark hours.

Thank you Chair.