



Solidarity House

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INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA – UAW

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April 20, 2021

The Honorable Janet Yellen, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20220

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken, U.S. Secretary of State
Lobby Harry S. Truman Building
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretaries Yellen and Blinken:

On behalf of the one million active and retired members of the International Union, UAW, I write to call on the United States government to support the struggle for democracy in Myanmar, led by workers and unions. The struggle persists in the face of crimes against humanity committed by the military junta, whose seizure of power is an affront to the will of the people of Myanmar and to global democracy. The U.S. must lead by example, supporting the labor movement and the people of Myanmar in their struggle for democracy. We call on you to engage our allies in defense of democracy in Myanmar.

As of April 15, 2021, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Myanmar) <https://aappb.org/>, 726 protesters have been murdered. In a particularly brutal example, the military massacred dozens of workers in Yangon's Hlaing Tha Yar industrial zone on Sunday, March 14. Two union members known to have been killed while participating in protests are Tun Win Han of the Mar Mar Noodle Factory Union and Zaw Zaw Htwe of the Solidarity Trade Union Myanmar. The junta uses war-grade weaponry, up to and including air strikes, against citizens advocating for the restoration of their democratically elected government. Children as young as five years old have been killed.

Over 3,150 people have been arrested, charged or sentenced since the February 1st Coup. Arrest warrants have been issued for at least 75 union leaders. Many union leaders have been forced into hiding by military raids on their homes and offices. Sectors represented by these union leaders include teachers, transport workers, garment workers, medical workers, and public sector civil servants. Police and military are stationed in industrial zones to monitor workers' movements to and from the protest sites. The military has declared at least 16 labor unions to be "illegal organizations." Many employers are providing the military police with lists of union members participating in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM). At least 135 workers have been fired for their participation. Despite the repression,

our sisters and brothers in the Myanmar labor movement continue to put their lives on the line every day through their leadership of the CDM general strike and the ongoing street demonstrations.

The Myanmar labor movement has urged the United States and the international community to reimpose all sanctions that were in place before Myanmar's turn toward democracy in 2016. The unions involved fully understand that the sanctions will impose hardships on their members. We join them in calling for these sanctions. The U.S. should encourage allies who receive its financial support, such as Thailand, India, and Japan, to implement similar economic sanctions until democracy is restored in Myanmar. All financial and other resources that sustain the military junta in Myanmar should be immediately frozen.

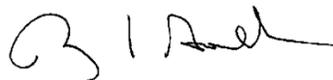
We call on the Treasury Department to add the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise to its list of targeted sanctions. The Treasury Department should identify and block all flow of resources to the military junta.

We call on the Treasury Department to support the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank Group in making clear that inappropriate use of already-disbursed money can result in a demand for a refund. The Treasury Department must insist that international financial institutions (IFIs) ensure that loans do not benefit entities associated with the Myanmar military. The Treasury Department should remind U.S. executive directors at IFIs that Myanmar should not receive US support for its financial applications, due to its Category 3 status in the *Trafficking in Persons Report* and because of the February 1st coup. U.S. directors on all IFIs should oppose ending the freeze before the junta is removed.

Through elected leaders and embassies, the United States should initiate dialogue with the CRPH (the cabinet committee of the legitimately elected government), Myanmar's unions, and civil society to ensure that our government is enabling a return to democracy.

The atrocities of the Myanmar military must not go unopposed. The country has previously gone through a long military rule and economic stagnation. Its people should not have to live through such a period again. The labor movement in Myanmar has spoken clearly, calling for the strongest possible economic measures to restore democracy. The United States must lead with concrete measures to restore democracy in Myanmar.

Sincerely,



Rory L. Gamble
President