

Filipinos in solidarity with the growing people's resistance in Myanmar

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We express solidarity with the continued worker, women and youth-led resistance to the February 1 coup d'état in Myanmar. Despite increasing violence against protests, including attacks on unarmed crowds with live ammunition, and continued crackdown against activists, journalists, opposition politicians, trade unionists and other dissidents, the resistance to the military coup under the banner of the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) continues to grow.

As of March 8, the confirmed death toll from the military junta's repression is 58, with activists warning that the real toll is likely to be higher. Thousands have been arrested and subjected to torture and disappearance.

However, street protests continue to grow, now mobilising hundreds of thousands. We hail the courage of the protesters in the face of the junta's violence and their uncompromising struggle for real democracy.

We are in total solidarity with the General Strike initiated by Myanmar's 9 major trade union federations on March 7, imposing an indefinite "full extended shutdown" of the economy. We note that strikes, particularly by public sector workers, have already proved to be an effective weapon against the coup. It is no coincidence that lethal force was first used by the junta against striking railways workers.

The immediate demand of the movement is that the military junta stands down and recognises the November 2020 elections that were won by Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy (NLD). However, we note that the CDM is calling for democracy to be extended beyond what was in place before the coup.

While Myanmar was nominally under civilian rule after 2011, the military-written constitution ensured that the military retained effective control over key areas of policy making and the economy.

The inability of the NLD to bring any resolution to the multiple ethnic and national conflicts that have been ongoing since Myanmar's independence in 1948 reflected the military's continued hold over power. Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD were rightly condemned for their support for the 2017 genocide against the Rohingya in Arakan Province.

However, as this genocide was initiated and perpetrated by the military, the overthrow of the NLD government by the military can only worsen the situation. The restoration of the civilian government and the removal of the military from politics are essential prerequisites for justice for the Rohingya and the numerous other oppressed nationalities and ethnicities in Myanmar.

We note the leading role being played by oppressed nationalities in the resistance to the military

coup. This, along with the leading role played by youth, women, organised labour and the prominence in the protests of new movements, such as that for LGBT+ rights, are cause for optimism that the CDM can win a real democracy for the people of Myanmar.

While we oppose sanctions that will harm the population of Myanmar, we strongly oppose the support of foreign capital for military-controlled enterprises in Myanmar. We call for ASEAN to prohibit investment in military-controlled enterprises and joint ventures with the military or military-controlled companies.

We also call for the immediate release of all political detainees and a stop to the brutal repression of pro-democracy protests in Myanmar. ASEAN must suspend Myanmar's membership in ASEAN and all governments must suspend diplomatic, military and economic cooperation with Myanmar until a democratically elected government is restored.

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