

Myanmar Regime Hunts Down Labor Activists Despite International Condemnation

Sunday 28 February 2021, by [The Irrawaddy](#) (Date first published: 23 February 2021).

Labour activists and striking workers in Myanmar opposing the military regime are facing a growing threat of being detained, despite the International Labor Organization (ILO) urging the junta to cease all harassment of striking workers.

Ma Moe Sandar Myint, chairwoman of the Federation of General Workers Myanmar, is in hiding after the authorities tried to detain her for leading thousands of workers in protest against the military regime.

She organized labor campaigns against military rule at factories in Yangon's Hlaing Tharyar Township since Feb. 5.

Ma Moe Sandar Myint also led more than 4,000 factory workers marching from Yangon's Hledan junction on Feb. 6, the first day of nationwide anti-regime protests.

She said the police raided her office on Feb. 5 and her house at night on Feb. 6.

"The regime must accept the democracy that our people want and accept the democratically elected government," said Ma Moe Sandar Myint.

A garment factory trade union leader in Hlaing Tharyar Township, who did not want to be named, said factory workers are in hiding as the authorities search for them for starting demonstrations.

She said they sleep in different places at night and protest every day.

"We are fighting against the junta as we want our people to have freedom and to be peaceful," she said.

On Tuesday, the ILO has called for the military to halt the arrests of trade unionists amid reports of police and soldiers conducting door-to-door searches of dormitories and hostels in the Hlaingtharyar Township, Yangon's industrial zone [1].

"It is alleged that these acts of harassment and intimidation have largely targeted young female workers working in the private sector industries of Yangon, who are living far away from their families in the rural areas," said the ILO.

Labor organizations told The Irrawaddy that the military's governing council works with employers to pressure workers not to take part in the protests.

An unnamed representative of the Confederations of Trade Unions of Myanmar said the authorities had been asking for the addresses of the trade union leaders. "The employers started collecting our addresses. The employers and military work together to pressure the union leaders," they said.

The ILO urged the military to ensure all workers can exercise their rights to freedom of association, assembly and expression and other human rights in a climate free from violence, pressure, fear and threats of any kind.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has reiterated his call on the military leadership to respect the will of the people of Myanmar and to adhere to democratic norms, with any differences to be resolved through peaceful dialogue [2].

SEO: Antonio Guterres, labor rights, trade unions, Confederations of Trade Unions of Myanmar, ILO, Federation of General Workers Myanmar, State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, coup, military in politics, rule of law, Tatmadaw, National League for Democracy, human rights, democracy, November 8 general election, Min Aung Hlaing, State Administrative Council, civil disobedience movement.

The Irrawaddy

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- The Irrawaddy. 26 February 2021:
<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-regime-hunts-labor-activists-despite-international-condemnation.html>
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Footnotes

[1] ESSF (article 56983), [Workers' rights: Statement on Myanmar](#).

[2] <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/02/1084682>