

We Stand With Myanmar

Public Statement of the Migrants and Refugees Network Conference of Jesuit Provincials of Asia Pacific (JCAP)

To all people of good will:

Today, we remember the second year when military forces, the Tatmadaw, brazenly seized power in Myanmar, suppressed the democratically elected government of the people, and imprisoned their democratic leaders. In the middle of a global pandemic, when many were suffering and afraid, the flame of democracy, which Myanmar has ignited and kept burning after decades of struggle, was again extinguished as the Tatmadaw cast terror and violence against its own people.

In the past two years, the Tatmadaw continued their reign of terror, raiding villages; burning homes and churches; detaining, torturing, and killing unarmed and innocent activists, protesters, and civilians. As of 23 January 2023 (UNHCR), the internally displaced people (IDP) more than 1.2 million since the coup from 330,000 IDP before the coup. The World Bank reports that in 2022, around 40% of Myanmar's population or about 22 million plunged into poverty, making their poverty incidence double than what it was in March 2020. The military junta have stifled dissent and opposition, shutting down communication and media outlets, arresting journalists, legally allowing searches, seizures, arrests, surveillance and interception of communications despite absence of court-issued warrants. They continue to do so to this day.

*Today, we celebrate the courage and faith of our brothers and sisters in Myanmar who are suffering, yet remain strong and steadfast in their quest for the will of the people to be respected and followed, for their rights and liberties to be restored and honored, to gain safety and security. Peacefully, they have made their voices heard, protesting in the streets, in their villages, even on social media, demanding an end to the abuse and subjugation of the military junta. Their youth have led most of these fearless efforts for their nation and for their people. **We pray for those who have offered their lives to make Myanmar a better place to live.***

More than ever, today, we believe that the call for urgent and decisive action to end the crisis cannot wait another year!

In solidarity with Myanmar, **the Migrants and Refugees Network in Asia Pacific call for the pursuit of three action points:**

- **First, the leadership of the ASEAN and other global leaders must undertake all available diplomatic interventions to end violence and restore democracy in the**

country at the soonest possible time. The support of the international community is essential in restoring peace and democracy in the country. Let your political negotiations be guided by your conscience and compassion.

- **Second, we call upon the Tatmadaw to immediately end the harassment, abuse and violence** inflicted towards their opponents and innocent citizens of Myanmar. They must show the world that they can be trusted as they ask for trust - *release the political prisoners and engage the different stakeholders again in meaningful dialogue based on justice and compassion.* They have to choose the path of shared responsibility and action to change the course of the crisis and end the violence and suffering. Let not the wounds of Myanmar fester to become unhealed.
- **Third, we call upon individuals and communities from all over the world to continue expressing and showing your concern for Myanmar in ways that you can.** Write your leaders and make them see what you see. Humanitarian aid is urgently needed to ensure that the people of Myanmar are provided life-saving goods and services. **We plead for the free, immediate and safe passage of aid to those in dire need in Myanmar.** But more so, urge effective action for the common good. **Let us not forget Myanmar.**

We remain one with Myanmar in their aspiration to save and shape their nation towards a better tomorrow. We dream with the people of Myanmar for a better future where there is justice and peace for all. We unite in faith with the Catholic bishops of Myanmar in their earnest plea to all stakeholders in Myanmar - *“We have suffered enough as a people, let all guns fall silent, let us reach out to all, as brothers and sisters and start the sacred pilgrimage of peace - united as a nation and as a people.”*

To our brothers and sisters in Myanmar, keep the faith, we are with you. The world will not forget you. **Today, with you, WE ARE MYANMAR.**

Migrants and Refugees Network in Asia Pacific

