

# Myanmar trade unions call for comprehensive economic sanctions

Tuesday 27 July 2021, by [IndustriAll Global Union](#) (Date first published: 22 July 2021).

**22 July, 2021. The Confederation of Trade Unions of Myanmar (CTUM) is calling for comprehensive economic sanctions against the country, and for the international community to isolate the military regime. The CTUM is part of the 16-member Labour Alliance, representing the entire labour movement in the country.**

*[Youtube Interview with Interview with Khaing Zar]*

Global unions [challenged the legitimacy of the military regime](#) at the International Labour Conference [1], and in June the ILO [adopted a resolution](#) calling for a return to democracy. IndustriALL affiliates participated in a number of solidarity actions and the executive committee adopted a [solidarity resolution](#) in April.

Myanmar adopted a new constitution in 2009 and had a civilian government from 2012 until the military coup on 1 February 2021. Under civilian rule, despite serious challenges, unions made significant progress. The CTUM negotiated through tripartite social dialogue structures, and won significant improvements in the minimum wage and working hours.

In November 2019, the IWFM and IndustriALL negotiated [freedom of association guidelines](#) that were endorsed by [ACT member brands](#), covering 200 factories and 130,000 workers. This provision has been extremely useful for the IWFM's organizing and making employers respect the right to peacefully demonstrate.

The military staged a coup on 1 February, claiming electoral fraud and arresting the president, party officials and other public figures. This provoked massive resistance, with a civil disobedience movement effectively shutting the country down. The military responded with brutal oppression. More than 900 people have been killed, over 10,000 have been arrested, and many more are in hiding. About 250,000 people have been internally displaced. As the pandemic has spread, the military has monopolized oxygen supplies, creating a health crisis.

The trade union movement in Myanmar believes that a combination of internal resistance and external solidarity and pressure is necessary to remove the regime. The international community must isolate the regime, end diplomatic and business relationships, and recognize the [National Unity Government](#) as the legitimate representative of the people of Myanmar.

IndustriALL general secretary Valter Sanches said:

“The spirit and actions of the people of Myanmar, who are risking their lives daily to overthrow the military dictatorship, are inspiring. To win this fight, the demands of the Myanmar trade unions need to be taken seriously and implemented internationally.

“The military dictatorship must be removed from UN bodies and the international community, as it was at the latest ILC, and the National Unity Government must be recognized. This must be implemented immediately, at the upcoming UN General Assembly, by all international governments that respect democracy and basic human and trade union rights.

“It is also crucial to cut off the dictatorship’s revenue stream to through comprehensive sanctions.

“We will continue to promote solidarity action, along with our affiliates and the global unions, until the people of Myanmar restore democracy and respect for human rights in the country.”

## **IndustriALL**

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## **P.S.**

• IndustriALL. 22 July, 2021:

<http://www.industriall-union.org/myanmar-trade-unions-call-for-comprehensive-economic-sanctions>

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## **Footnotes**

[1] ESSF (article 59016), [Global unions to challenge legitimacy of Myanmar junta at ILC](#).